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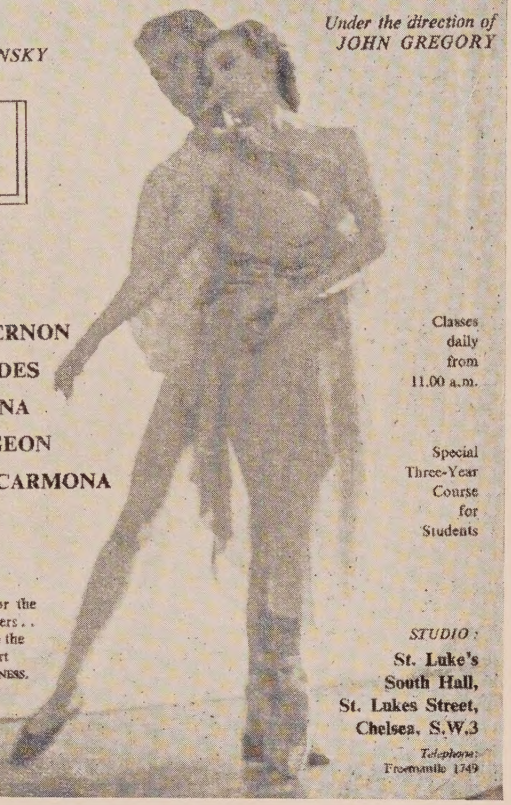

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Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS

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MERSEY HOUSE, 132-4, FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.

WE have waited a long time for the return of Ballet Theatre. The company were almost our first overseas visitors after the war when their freshness and friendliness won all our hearts. Now after many years, which have been crammed with ballet activity from all parts of the world, they return to revive our rather flagging spirits.

On the first night of their all-too-short season at Covent Garden, the warmth and pleasure of the audience from all parts of the house, made it apparent that they are held in deep affection by the English ballet public. Any uncertainty that we might have felt about the change to the rather pompous title of American National Ballet Theatre, was soon dispelled. In the minds of most of us it will always be "Ballet Theatre", as the tone of the company has not become contaminated by any tiresome nationalistic tendencies. If the company itself has escaped this disease, the repertoire has not; this is a good thing as ballet should always have its roots deep in the soil of the country that gave it birth.

It was all the more of a pity that the first ballet on the opening night had to be Balanchine's *Theme and Variations* (Tchaikovsky's third suite) which turned out to be an inferior example of the master's work. This parure of semi-precious stones was made to sparkle more then it deserved by the inclusion of two very precious stones—Alicia Alonso and Igor Youskevitch. Twelve years have passed since we saw the latter in this country and he has matured. He leaps, beats, and turns with such ease and lack of preparation that one is apt to wonder if it has really all happened. He is a *danseur noble* such as, since the war, we have only seen in George Skibine.

After this appallingly decorated Russian excursion we settled down to honest-to-God Americana, which in the first week was divided into two groups—that of the small-town frustration of Eugene O'Neill, and the other from the high, wide, and handsome open spaces of Zane Grey.

In the former group is Tudor's *Pillar of Fire* which though it has an English choreographer and an Austrian composer, Schoenberg, is almost completely American in idea.

The theme is universal—a near-middle aged girl, Hagar, gives herself to the local Lothario whom she does not care for, as she is afraid of becoming a spinster like her elder sister and also because she thinks her younger sister has gone off with the man she really loves. Such a domestic situation is basic theme of every cheap novelette and mushy newspaper serial, but Tudor has given it Ibsen-like dignity. Nora Kaye's Hagar, always a moving performance, has now gained added depth in its very restraint. As the small-town playboy-across-the-road, James Mitchell was more sexy than Hugh Laing (who originally played it) but less sincere.

How sinister are the origins of rhymes that children burble through spoonfuls of sticky malt—"Lizzie Bordon got an axe, gave her mother twenty whacks. . .". The messy murder that occurred at Fall River towards the end of the last century seems hardly any more suitable for use as a ballet subject than it does for nursery hilarity. But in *Fall River Legend*, Agnes de Mille has created for Nora Kaye (as Lizzie Bordon) one of the great dramatic ballet roles of this, or any other century.

This is the best work that we have yet seen from Agnes de Mille, she has shed many of the finicking mannerisms that were so tiresome in some of her previous ballets. Nora Kaye has proved in these two ballets that she is that rare person, in fact one whom we had almost thought was lost to us for ever, the dramatic dancer. Let us hope that somebody will soon think of some theme for her other than frustation.

Of the ballets that get their impetus from the wide open spaces, Eugene Loring's *Billy the Kid* was probably the first. Commissioned by Lincoln Kirstein in 1938, it must be considered the father of this type of ballet and what has since come from de Mille and Robbins does, to a certain extent, derive from it.

William Bonney was a famous desperado just after the civil war. His mother was killed before his eyes when he was twelve so he avenged her death by killing a man for each year of his life until he was twenty-one. The ballet is as exciting as any Western film it is full of ideas and invention. Kriza gives a lovely performance as Billy and his timing is masterly.

Agnes de Mille's *Rodeo* is bright and lively. On Saturday afternoon in the South Western States the ranch hands get together to display their skill at riding, throwing and roping. A woman's part in these jolly proceedings, is to try and rope her man which she frequently achieves with more success at the Saturday Night Social that follows.

If ballets such as these are not the foundation of a National company, I really do not know what is. I have always said that ballet like any other art, should reflect the country of its origin; otherwise it becomes a displaced person. The ballets that Diaghilev brought from Russia were most truly national even if they were based on fairy tales by a Frenchman; the ballets of Roland Petit could have emerged from no country other than France; the same thing applies those works that have come from central and western European countries. Outside influences can add quality and dignity but they will not, in the end, be able to escape from the national background.

Those of you who pay regular attention to these pages may be surprised to see this month's cover. You probably thought you were going to see Ram Gopal. Owing to various technical difficulties it was not possible to use the photograph that we wanted. We now intend to only use colour when we are completely satisfied that the photograph is suitable (no doubt there will be sighs of relief from many of you). In order that you will not feel cheated in any way we have added four extra pages, so that now you will get more articles and photographs than we have ever given you before. To those of you who liked colour, I can assure you that we shall be in very full-colour in our Christmas number, if not before.

Cover Story

Our Cover this month shows Natalie Krassovska as the Street Dancer in Massine's *Le Beau Danube*, she dances with Anton Dolin's Festival Ballet which will be seen at the Stoll Theatre, London, on October 24.

NATALIE KRASSOVSKA is a third generation ballerina. Her grandmother was a soloist at the Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, her mother was the beautiful Lydia Krassovska of the Diaghilev company. Her father came from the old Scottish family of Leslie, and this was the name under which Natalie danced for many years. She was born in St. Petersburg and studied at the Russian gymnasia. At a very early age she went to the Russian teacher, Preobrajenska, in Paris. Her first appearance on the stage was in the *corps de ballet* of a company under the direction of Nijinsky's sister, Bronislava Nijinska, in 1932. Here she was seen by Serge Lifar who asked her to tour South America with him in 1934. Her first major role was that of the girl in Fokine's *Spectre de la Rose* with Lifar in the role originally created by Nijinsky.

Returning to Europe she joined Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo in 1936, and with that company she has remained until this year. Before the war she danced many important soloist roles and was seen in London when the company were at the Alhambra and Drury Lane. When the company went to America at the beginning of the war she took over most of the principal roles at the same time as taking her mother's name of Krassovska.

Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo was the first company to bring the great classics to the U.S.A., touring them in every American town of importance as well as giving several New York seasons each year. Krassovska had great success in *Giselle*, *Coppelia*, *Nutcracker*, and *Swan Lake*. She has danced in all the Fokine ballets as the great choreographer was very fond of her and thought her style most suitable for his work. With Massine, she danced in *Le Beau Danube*, *Le Tricorne*, and *Capriccio Espagnol* as well as dancing in the two films *The Gay Parisian* (film version of *Gaite Parisienne*) and *Spanish Fiesta* (film version of *Capriccio Espagnol*).

Last year she made her first reappearance in England at Princes Theatre, in *Stars of the Ballet* with Boris Traline as her partner. Later in the year she toured with Ballet Rambert, and also appeared with Jean Babilée in the *Bluebird Pas de Deux* at the Empress Hall Galas in aid of Nijinsky.

Now she is back again from America with Festival Ballet.

Anna Cheselka who used to be with the Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas is now with Festival Ballet (*Photo: Denis de Marney*)

Contributors

RAM GOPAL is one of the greatest Indian dancers that we have seen in the West. On pages 8 and 9 he explains the dances of his native land.

BRYAN MATHESON has written for a number of magazines about ballet and the theatre. On pages 6 and 7 he writes about the filming of *The Tales of Hoffman*.

TATLOCK MILLER, the Australian ballet critic, This month writes about the Danish choreographer Birger Bartholin, (page 12).

BAIRD HASTINGS, the American critic working in Paris, writes about one of the most famous ballet composers of his country, Aaron Copeland, (page 11).

EVAN SENIOR, our music critic, writes this month about some of the noises which we hear in ballet that are not made by the orchestra. He also writes about the composer Stanley Bates who has recently returned from America, (pages 18 and 19).

RICHARD KAYNE who recently wrote about the dancing in *Golden City*, contributes an article on the dancing in *Touch and Go* now at the Prince of Wales Theatre, (page 18).

CLIVE BARNES, one of our regular contributors writes about John Cranko's *The Witch*, given by New York City Ballet, (page 21).

Next month

In the November issue of DANCE AND DANCERS there will be opinions and photographs of **AMERICAN NATIONAL BALLET THEATRE.**

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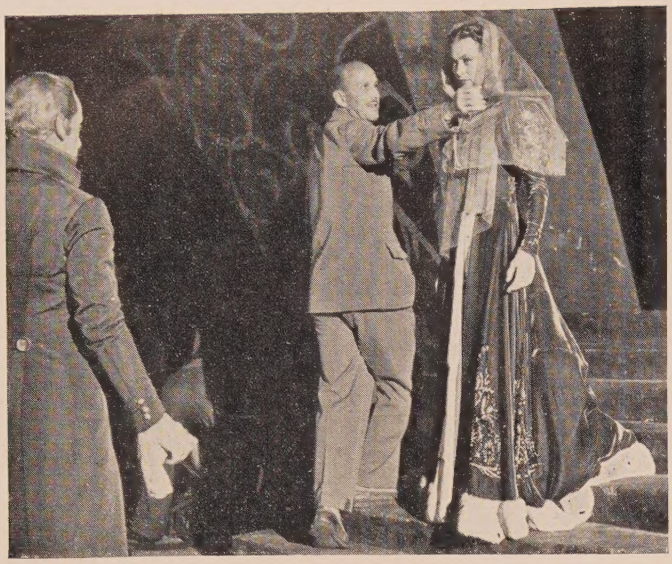


AN EXPERIMENT

The marriage of Ballet and Opera in the Tales of Hoffmann

by

Bryan Matheson

Michael Powell directs Moira Shearer in the last sequence of the film. Helpmann as Lindorf watches.

AT Shepperton Film Studios Emeric Pressburger and Michael Powell have utilised all the resources of colour and trick photography to achieve a perfect production of what Sir Thomas Beecham has himself described as ideal film material. Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann*.

This is the first time for many years that the arts of dancing and singing have been thus combined to produce an entire opera. I think the last time was a few months prior to the first World War, when Diaghilev presented Rimsky-Korsakoff's *Le Coq d'Or* in Paris with a double cast of ballet and operatic artists.

But the difficulties in the present case are probably greater than those that confronted Diaghilev. In his production, the dancers visually interpreted the singers. For the films, however, it is necessary that their lip movements should also synchronise. Each of the principal dancers has therefore had to memorise his (or her) part in the score, and foreign artists such as Massine, Ludmilla Tcherina, and Edmond Audran have had to spend their very limited spare time studying English vowels and consonants under the expert guidance of Molly Terraine.

The lesson of Red Shoes

Musical cues have also had to be perfectly timed. And, thanks to the dancers' rhythmic and musical training, many scenes have been in studio parlance 'put in the can' with astonishing speed. Than ksequally, of course, to the direction of Michael Powell and the work of the many people concerned with the technical side of the picture. As Moira Shearer pointed out to me, both dancers and technicians have learnt a great deal from their former association in *Red Shoes*. They have come to appreciate one another's difficulties, and the result is more patience and therefore more efficiency.

The technical staff are, almost without exception, the same as those who made *Red Shoes*. And in the filmic presentation of ballet, there was much that was memorable in that picture. Bill Wall, the chief electrician, introduced me proudly to the unit's baby, the Mole-Richardson effects 'spot', especially designed for the former film. With a 15,000,000 candlepower beam, it is the world's most powerful spotlight. And to prevent the projector from being shrivelled up, a stream of water is kept continually circulating around it, through pipes fixed to the twenty foot rostrum on which it stands. For isolating a particular dancer, this is the only 'spot' capable of piercing the technicolour and providing a sharp edge to the beam. The ordinary 'spots' which are also, of course, in use, only give a diffused radiance.

Other problems face the hairdresser Joe Shear and the make-up artist Connie Reeves. The former enjoys working with ballet artists ("They take such pride in the work you do for them, and they also have some magnificent ideas of their own"), but their work sets special problems. For example, Moira Shearer's lovely hair was not sufficiently long for the involved coiffeur required for the doll, so special plats had to be moulded into it. For an actress this would be quite simple. But for a dancer whose day is a running commentary of *pirouettes* and *pas de bourrees*, an especially firm coiffeur is required.

Also, the exhausting 'work-outs' beneath the powerful studio lamps naturally induce excessive sweating, and, with any ordinary gum, wigs would soon come unfixed, thereby costing the studio hundreds of pounds in wasted time. A special rubber fixative is, therefore, used. Only once during the 'shooting' did it fail, when Massine executed a particularly energetic turn, and the wig abruptly departed from his head. This necessitated a re-take. But Mr. Shear's record of success in this department is exemplary.

For Miss Reeves the problem is to combine both ballet and film make-up requirements. The continual movement of dancers demands a more exaggerated make-up than is customary in the 'straight' Theatre. In this film a similar effect is achieved with the use of subtler lines and shadows. Nevertheless, the mixing of the various colours for the more eccentric make-ups has utilised all the resources of Miss Reeves' palette.

Many of the most startling effects are achieved with the use of masks. These are the work of Terry Morgan, who also made everything in the way of 'props' for the production, including the carousel with its miniature puppets, the encrusted candelabra, the elaborately jewelled necklaces. "Most of the props are of a fantastic nature, emanating from Hein Heckroth's brilliant mind" he explains "You couldn't buy them anywhere. They just have to be made". And, with only three weeks preparation for this elaborate production, and a narrow time schedule which allows only six weeks for the 'shooting' as opposed to the six months granted to *Red Shoes*, Terry Morgan had to work at continual high speed from dawn to dusk to keep abreast of production requirements.

However, the dancers probably have the most gruelling day of all. For after being in the studios from early morning, they must still be able to face the camera's relentless eyes in the early evening. Their *arabesques* must still be as perfect, their *entrechats* as sure. Many of them have to be out of bed at four o'clock in the morning, to reach Shepperton in time. Moira Shearer arrives most mornings at 6.45 in order to be ready on the set at eight o'clock. Massine is luckier. He has taken a house near the studios, so that he is even able to return home for lunch, startling local

French stars, Ludmilla Tcherina, and husband, Edmond Audran, relax between the shooting

IN BALLET

residents as he drives through the streets in one of his three different make-ups as Spalanzani, Schlemil or Franz.

And so to Hein Heckroth, the production designer. For over twenty years a designer for all the principal continental theatres, he has now become completely attuned to films. "I am fortunate to be working with someone like Michael Powell," he says. "We both have the same artistic approach and understanding. And the medium itself offers enormous opportunities to a designer, for in it you can achieve results that you only dreamed of on the stage".

For each of the three acts, of which the linking theme is the three loves of Hoffmann, Heckroth has devised a different colour motif. The first is dominated by yellow (in one of its scenes a fine effect is simply achieved with cellophane chandeliers and a vista of gauze), the second, by black, red and gold; and the third by grey and green.

With regard to film ballet, Hein Heckroth puts forward a point already made by Frederick Ashton, who, with the exception of a dance created by Massine for himself, has devised the entire choreography. It is that filming demands an entirely sculptural approach that the Theatre cannot provide. It is possible to film the same position or *enchainement* from a number of different angles, and to reproduce them together on the screen. And at one moment in the picture this is, in fact, done.

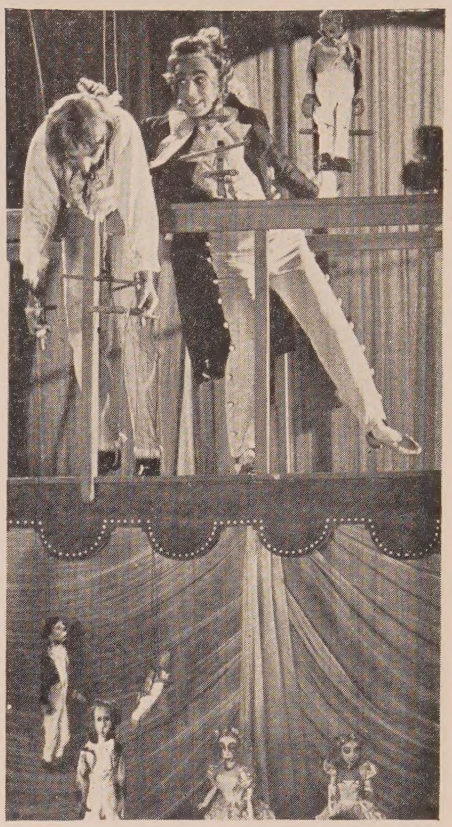
Unlike Heckroth, however, Ashton does not find the medium so amenable. He approaches it as a job of work with many interesting sides to it, but prefers creating ballets for the Theatre. Both Ludmilla Tcherina and her husband Edmond Audran, as dancers, second him in this. They both have had previous experience of film ballet, Tcherina in *Red Shoes*, Audran in the French film *La Belle Que Voila*. "It is a fine idea to bring ballet to the more general public," says Audran. "The Theatre is a popular art, and Ballet, after all, is a part of the Theatre. There is no reason why its popularity should not extend to the cinema-goer. But as a dancer, I prefer the stage to the films, in which there is a complete lack of continuity, and one particular movement may have to be repeated an infinite number of times".

I saw this happen to Audran in the Dragonfly Ballet (which replaces the extract from *Don Giovanni* in the prologue). His death fall as the male dragonfly was being filmed in 'close-up', but it was only after innumerable 'takes' that he was permitted to remain dead!

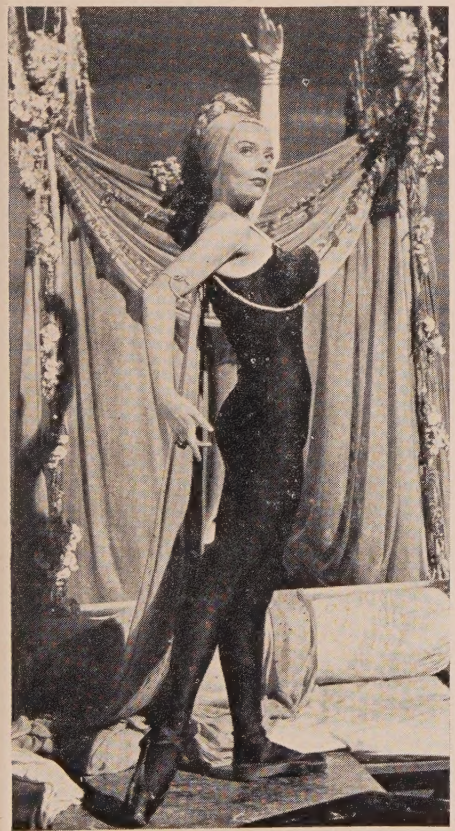
There are many other interesting ballet people connected with this picture. Hein Heckroth's assistant is a former dancer (now painter) Ivor Beddoes, who, with Frederick Ashton, was one of the original members of Camargo Society. Having trained as an artist before becoming a dancer, he has now, with his return from wartime service, reverted—not without considerable heartbreak, but with great success—to his former occupation. Ashton's assistant is dancer Alan Carter, who also appears in the ballet. Moira Shearer's 'stand-in' is another distinguished dancer Joan Harris. And, although Ashton has not employed a full male and female *corps de ballet*, there are moments in the film which require some group miming, and, among the artists engaged for this, is Travis Kemp.

"This may well have a revolutionary effect on the filming of both opera and ballet" is Massine's opinion. And he should know. For he was the first artist to attempt to record dance notation on celluloid. And the filming of his *Gaiete Parisienne* and *Capriccio Espagnol* in Hollywood with members of the Russian Ballet, if far from perfect artistically, was the first attempt to reproduce cinematically two ballets in their entirety.

But Massine's view is echoed by everybody working on this picture. There is a pioneer enthusiasm about, which one scents the moment one steps onto the set. This experiment if it succeeds (and from what I have seen it is going to) may well prove that Pressburger and Powell (always keen innovators) have discovered the most effective way of bringing both opera and ballet to the screen.



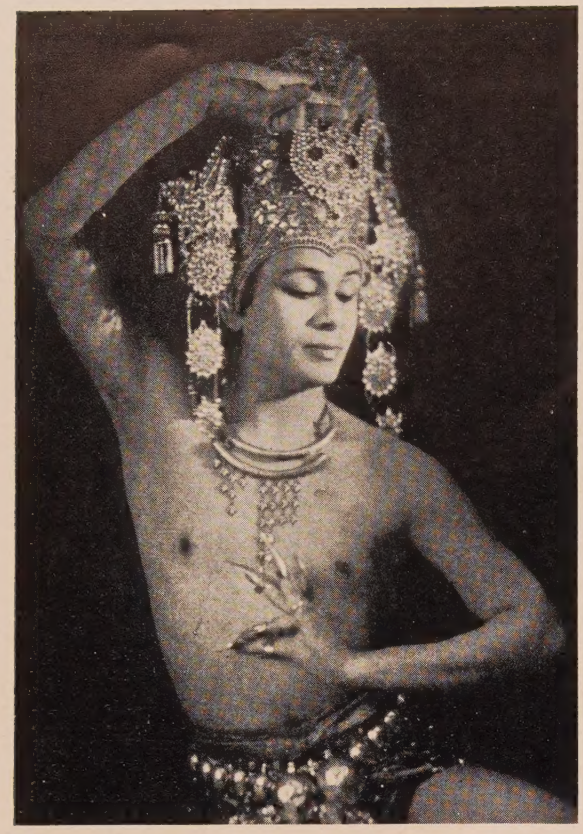
Leonide Massine, as Spalanzi, and his servant Cochenille (Frederick Ashton) work puppets that appear as "guests" at the reception given for the doll, Olympia



Tcherina as Giulietta, the Venetian courtesan.

Moira Shearer, as the doll Olympia, dances in Act 1. Hoffman (Robert Rouseville) and his constant companion Nicklaus (Pamela Brown) watch her. Owing to his magic spectacles, the doll appears real to Hoffmann

Offenbach's opera has been faithfully reproduced. The composing of it took many years and was never completely finished when he died. Afterwards it was revised and re-scored by Guiraud
(All photos by Bert Cann)



INDIAN DANCING FOR

by Ram Gopal

One of the greatest Indian dancers of our time writes on how to look at the dances of his country, explaining its background and the difference between the four main schools.

Ram Gopal in the Cosmic Dance of Shiva. This is a Kathakali dance from Malabar in South India. The elaborate head-dress was made by a jeweller in North India who will never make anything for a dancer unless he or she is really good. It consists of semi-precious stones, rose topaze, etc.

Ram Gopal and his company will return to London before Christmas

This article is especially addressed to the average theatre-goer, and deals with the main features of Indian dancing in the most brief and simple way, avoiding all long and difficult words. But before getting down to facts concerning our ancient dances it is worth remarking that London is rapidly becoming the universal centre of the dance in all its rich and varied aspects and that the reason for this is the tremendous interest in the dance shown by the public over here; an intelligent interest which is in striking contrast to the lassitude which exists throughout most of India concerning her beautiful traditional dances, with only a few authoritative critics to encourage the real, genuine dance styles. This is probably because whereas it takes at least seven years to master any one of the Indian dance-techniques, it takes twice that time to become a qualified critic!—so don't make the mistake of thinking that any *Indian person can tell you about Indian dancing, as this is unfortunately not the case, and you might get sorely confused.*

IT has been my custom in recent years to give a short explanation of Indian dancing from the stage, but Britishers can divest themselves of the idea that this is only necessary for their instruction. It is a thousand times more necessary in India itself, and Indians seem to enjoy the discourse as much as Europeans do. And the one "critic" who shouted loudest that I shouldn't speak on the stage, is ironically enough the one who asks me the most questions after the performance.

To make a start on the subject of Indian dancing itself, the first thing I should like to point out is that it is not difficult to enjoy. All the difficult names we use do not have to be learned before one can appreciate a performance. There are four main schools of Indian dancing, and although this may sound complicated at first it should be remembered that India is a vast sub-continent in which quantities of different languages are spoken, different religions are practised and in which different races live separate lives with diverse customs. It is all part of the Orient, to be sure, and although it is a mistake to think that "Indian dancing" covers the whole matter, being composed of undulating movements accompanied by dreadfully discordant music, yet there are certain aspects of Indian dancing which apply to all the four different dance-styles, and we will begin by describing the most noticeable details which differ from the Western dance-techniques.

The Indian dancer should be judged very much on his or her foot-work. Bells are worn strapped or tied round the ankles, but the Indian dancer practises steps without bells, and must be able to make clearly audible rhythms with the soles of his bare feet. This is one of the ways in which you can tell a genuine, trained Indian dancer; soft, inconclusive foot-work has no place in our classrooms. Amateurs also tend to make too much noise with their bells, on occasion.

In many of the styles the dancer is judged mostly on the use of his or her face, and in India a blank face devoid of expression is a disqualifying factor for a dance-career. Some of the venerable dance-teachers have such mastery over their facial muscles that they can literally cry with one side of their faces and laugh with the other—one eye brimming with tears, the other sparkling with mirth.

These expressions give life to the hand-gestures, and the combination of gesture and expression forms its own language of the dance which is as fascinating as it is eloquent and through which the accomplished Indian dancer can express any situation, emotion or sentiment, whether ancient or modern, and any bird, flower or animal. A lot of nonsense is talked about the difficulty of understanding this "language", but once one has got the general idea (which I try to give as part of my stage performances) the Indian dance begins to wield its age-old fascination, and people begin to feel they *must* see more and more of it. That is the reason for this article. The complicated Indian names which apply to these gestures are beside the point as far as the onlooker is concerned. An Indian doesn't have to learn to pronounce the word *arabesque* or *entrechat* in order to appreciate the Western art of ballet, although he would certainly appreciate simple explanations of the dance itself, and its purpose.

The neck-movement which forms a part of all Indian dancing, in which the head glides smoothly from side to side on the shoulders, is a convention in much the same way as blocked toe-shoes are a convention of the ballet in the West. It should be a subtle movement, and may be a rythmical embellishment, or may describe some emotion. It is invariably grossly exaggerated and performed to excess by amateurs.

Lastly, every school of Indian dancing has a definite, fixed technical curriculum which may be learned, physically speaking, just as ballet-technique may be learned over here; but each style has a religious and spiritual significance, tradition and background which the ballet lacks. In each technique there are several different styles, the most difficult and important

Ram Gopal in a Bharata Natya dance from Tanjore in South India. This particular dance is a dance-poem

EVERYMAN

one being the real basic classical style which takes many years to master, and various sloppy and decadent versions which are both popularised and easy to acquire. The difference between the two is roughly comparable to the difference between classical ballet dancing and musical comedy dancing in the West. You, the Westerner, must rely on your instinct to tell you what is real and genuine, and what is sloppy and false, using the same faculty as that which tells you the difference between a diamond and cut-glass. Anyway, you know by now that Indian dancing has more to its credit than snake-like arms and hips coupled with improbable tinsel head-dresses.

To continue this brief treatise, the four main schools are to be mentioned next, and whereas it must be noted that a brisk and rather vituperative discussion is going on in India as to the relative ages of the different styles, yet one usually finds that an investigation into the antiquity of each school takes one back to the most ancient days, when mythological beings are reputed to have walked the earth.

Dances of Tanjore courtesans

BHARATA NATYA, which we will call style No. 1, comes from the South and is famous as being the traditional dance of the Tanjore courtesans. *Devadasis*, (literally "Servants of the Gods") girls of great beauty and matchless skill, practised this dance, dedicating their lives to the service of some temple deity; but gradually this dance became associated with women of ill repute, and disappeared altogether as far as society and the general public was concerned. This is the dance for which Pavlova was searching in her dance-tours of India in the 'twenties, but she was told that it was extinct. Happily she was misinformed, and today *Bharata Natya* is the most popular dance-style in India. Owing to its association with low women, however, it is generally and mistakenly believed to be solely for women but E. Krishna Iyer, the greatest authority on *Bharata Natya* completed researches which together with my own investigations exploded that idea as pure rubbish. There are many movements and indeed whole ballets and dances which are especially composed for and only suitable for men, which are still being performed in South India.

Dance-Drama of South India

Style No. 2 is the KATHAKALI Dance-Drama of Malabar, also in South India. As *Bharata Natya* is delicate, swift and precise, *Kathakali* is basically vigorous, robust and earthy. The costumes and make-up are highly conventional and sensational in the extreme. All-night ballets taking 16 hours are performed to torchlight, which show fabulous mythological events, symbolising the eternal battle between Good and Evil. This dance is considered unsuitable for women, being too strenuous and difficult for them, and boys take the parts of heroines just as youths represented women in Elizabethan drama in the West. There are gentler curriculums which may be studied by women—but the great dance-dramas are absolutely tabu to the female sex.

Court dances of the Mogul Emperors

Style No. 3 is KATHAK, the whirling dance of the North, which came into being by an intermingling of the refined and elegant court-dances of the Mogul Emperors (most of whom encouraged the arts at their palaces) with the indigenous Hindu dance-styles. *Kathak* is remarkable for its incredible lightning spins and terrific foot-work—one girl performer has been known to crack a concrete floor with her feet.

Sinuous dances from Assam

The fourth and last style is MANIPURI, the swaying, sinuous dance from Manipur, Assam, North-East India. Here the dancer should keep her face quite expressionless as the movements of her body and limbs are supposed to convey all that is necessary to the spectator. The extreme grace and fluidity of the movements, however, mask a very exacting technical style. The costumes are beautifully embroidered and decorated with glass in the traditional North Indian manner. One of the leisurely *Manipuri* ballets performed by daylight out-of-doors is a joy to behold. There are also virile solo-dances for masculine performers in Manipur.

One of the principle features of all Indian dancing is the ripe old age at which the masters still perform, outdoing the younger pupils in style and elegance. Kunju Kurup, the greatest teacher of *Kathakali* who is my "*guru*," still takes part in 16-hour ballets in his late sixties; one of my *gurus* of *Bharata Natya* is a great box-office draw at 72; Mahararaj Bindar Din died after performing *Kathak* in his eighties, and so on. One day I hope to bring these great masters with my Company to England and the West where I am convinced Londoners will be as delighted to see them as they will be to dance before such an appreciative audience. This I sincerely believe and intend to carry out.

Ram Gopal in Garuda, *the famous Dance of the Golden Eagle. This is a solo taken from a sixteen-hour Kathakali dance drama. The eagle observes a celestial drink while the god is asleep but as he refrains from drinking it so he is turned into a god himself*

Speak Up!

BRICKS FOR OUR GARDEN

SIR,—Covent Garden appears to have appointed itself the centre of ballet in this country. Dare one, therefore, criticise so august an establishment? At the risk of being indicted for treason there are one or two points I would like to make:

1. Could we not have a return to the good old days of real gallery queueing? The theatre queue system has proved itself to be the fairest and best means of getting a cheap seat for those who think it worth the trouble, but at Covent Garden bureaucracy has gone mad. One first of all queues all night especially for the privilege of queueing again later in the day. I have known this cause resentment and ill-feeling through bad organisation, and why, after four o'clock, when the ordinary booking is supposed to have opened are holders of queue tickets allowed in front of ordinary ticket buyers? Apart from this, I can't tell whether I am going to be free to go to a performance six weeks ahead, nor have I the money to buy a whole bunch of tickets at one go. But it is becoming increasingly obvious that the management are not concerned in the least with ballet and opera for the people with limited means despite the fact that it is state controlled. Six shillings for the gallery to hear La Scala? Not for me!

2. Is it really necessary for a two-hour programme to start at seven? Why not begin at half past five then we could go to the pictures as well?

3. Presumably the orchestra consists of competent professional musicians: then it must be either lack of leadership or lack of rehearsal (or both) which is responsible for some of the horrible noises it makes.

4. Could one diffidently suggest that the lighting is not all it might be and plead for the electricians to be sent across the road for instruction, to Drury Lane, where, previously with *Oklahoma* and now with *Carousal*, the superb lighting should be an object lesson for all in that branch of the profession. Considering the amount of equipment at Covent Garden and the personnel employed, the results are shocking. And please, could the gentleman in the dome be moved to a place a great many miles away? That ghastly flickering pink glare darting haphazardly over the stage reminds me of the death ray of H. G. Wells—one half expects to see the unfortunate, suddenly trapped soloist shrivel to a cinder. Perhaps this might not be a—but no, it would not be right to harbour such wicked thoughts.

5. A little civility and courtesy at the box-office would not come amiss. It does not cost anything and it is so unlike other theatres. One has only to think of the Princes which has one of the best (if not the best) galleries in London, a simple and efficient queueing system and a very courteous and helpful staff inside and out—in short, a pleasant atmosphere from the start. At Covent Garden there seems to be a deplorable "Take it or leave it" attitude which I can only ascribe to the safety of working under the State, lack of regular competition, and audiences, painfully uncritical, which seem to be mesmerised by the name of the place alone.

Is there *nothing* wrong with the Sadler's Wells Ballet?

I confess that I find myself completely unable to understand the roar of adulation which greets every performance, good, bad or indifferent. I find a stodginess and a lack of vitality in the dancing of this company that Miss Bayliss would never have tolerated in the days when the Vic-Wells was a vital creative force and always danced as if they really enjoyed it. I feel that the move to Covent Garden was made far too soon and that the company should have consolidated itself in its own theatre after the war before spreading itself over the vast open spaces of Floral Street. A loyal, but alas! undiscriminating public appear to have given the company the impression that it is always perfect.—A. F. HILL, 25, *Montague Street, Russell Square, London, W.C.*1.

HAVE YOU ORDERED YOUR NOVEMBER DANCE AND DANCERS?

New York City Hangover

Being the final impressions of New York City Ballet who were our first summer visitors at Covent Garden from July 10 to August 19. The ballets given by this company have caused more controversy than any given since Massine made his choreographic symphonies before the war.

A hangover is something that hits you dully in the face on the morning-after-the-night-before. We are certain that there are not many of our readers who have suffered in such a way. The six weeks of New York City Ballet have left many people in a state that bears something closely akin to it. Impossible during the orgy to see everything in its true light. Now the intoxicant fumes are lifting, we have asked our old friends, from various parts of Covent Garden, to write what they feel about it on the morning after :

FROM THE STALLS

Through the haze of the morning after, among the blurred impressions left over from an orgy of nineteen new ballets and forty-five new dancers, a few salient facts manage to emerge—the mastery of Balanchine as a choreographer; the delight of seeing dancers to whom dancing seems to be a joy as well as a job; the distressing lack of décors (financial stringency or reaction by Balanchine against the painter-dominated days of Diaghilev?); the admirable musical quality of both choreography and dancing in nearly every ballet; the need for more and better ballets by choreographers other than Balanchine to give variety to the repertoire; and the way in which the whole work of the company is obviously dominated by the single personality of Balanchine. One begins and ends with Balanchine—which is as it should be, for the real excitement of the season has been the chance of seeing his work. Despite rumours to the contrary, not all his ballets are masterpieces, nor even successes; but *Serenade*, *Orpheus*, *Prodigal Son* and *Firebird* (when one has seen it often enough to forget Fokine) rank with the greatest ballets of our time. And if we have been disappointed with some of his lesser works, it is probably partly the disappointment of surfeit; how many of these ballets, presented as new jewels in the Sadler's Wells repertoire (and with adequate décors), should we have hailed with anything short of rapture?

John Banbury

STALLS CIRCLE

New York City ballet seems to have little to do with the city that gives it name, except that Balanchine, who is the alpha and omega of the company, has a school there. Balanchine is the greatest creator of danced-movement in the world today (I keep telling myself this to convince myself) but when it comes to forming a company round his genius there are certain limitations. Many of these creations are not ballets in the accepted sense and although one in a programme would be exciting, three merely counteract each other. I doubt whether there has ever been any choreographer who had such infinite variety that an audience could stand many evenings of only his ballets, specially when they are undecorated.

Another failing is Balanchine's inability to do anything interesting for male dancers. If this continues we shall be back in the middle of the last century when the male dancer was no more than a *porteur*. The fact that they have little to do has made the boys of the company the dullest we have seen for some time.

The programme-making was extraordinary and when the company returns to England (as we all sincerely hope they will) somebody ought to find out just what ballets are liked over here; not necessarily the same thing as what New York likes. A lot of annoyance was caused by the programmes being changed, all understandable in the first few weeks owing to Tallchief's accident, but no excuse later in the season.

These defects are far less numerous than with most companies and the credit side is rosy. The girls are excellent from the principals to the *corps de ballet* and their technique is remarkable, some of them have even more than that—Melissa Hayden has personality. In Jean Rosenthal they have that rare denizen of the ballet world—a lighting expert. There are certain ballets and moments in ballets that will remain as being some of the most satisfying moments in all the years I have seen ballet. For instance, the final movement of *Serenade* never failed to move me, like the final movement of Tchaikovsky's sixth symphony, it is the triumph of despair. In fact the whole ballet is like snow crystals on a clear winter night. *Prodigal Son* probably gave me the most complete pleasure of all, with *Orpheus* running it pretty close, except the latter needs a dancer with a more flexible body than Magallanes in the title role. The significance of these two ballets is that they are designed; their success is proof that Diaghilev was right in believing that ballet should be a combination of three arts. *Divertimento*, with a good score by Alexei Haieff, was an abstract work with character dances (Scottish influence was very noticeable at one point), which had more gaiety and invention than any of Balanchine's recent works. Of the other choreographers, Ashton's *Illuminations* was the most important and the greater part of it very good.

I rather hope that I shall never again have to see *Jones Beach*, *Age of Anxiety* or *Pas de Deux Romantique*, and I suppose I am the only person who will survive without *Bourée Fantasque*.

P. W.

AMPHITHEATRE

Everyone must be agreed that Balanchine is an amazing choreographer but whether his particular qualities are those of a genius or of an extremely talented and intelligent man is surely open to question? He is certainly the most prolific of choreographers but it is this very fact which seems to me to be an ominous sign. Genius is rarely prolific and prolonged, and what significance lies in his disregard for ballet's other partner—décor? Ballet is a stage picture not merely a series of dance patterns set to a chosen score.

There is no reason why Balanchine's outpouring should stop. There are many more symphonies and concertos than he has yet used and his ingenuity in devising new classical *pas* seems inexhaustible. But what does it all mean and what is its ultimate value?

Balanchine's avowed aim, according to Kirstein, seems to include the creation of a purely American style based on classicism, with none of classicism's extraneous embellishments which, according to him, have been added by sentimental Europeans. But to create a ballet with choreography and costumes based on the classical idea it is surely essential to preserve the *raison d'etre* of classicism which is, perhaps, the expression of beauty through disciplined movement or, if you prefer it, significant form.

And what of his dancers? It does not matter whether the material is European, American or Asiatic, the basic idea, with local divergences, is the same. These young Americans have many excellent qualities—virility, attack and some charm but the expression of classicism needs more than this. It needs the training and discipline of the whole body of each dancer to a fine point of technique and style, based on the European tradition. Ingenuity of steps and poses, performed by dancers with little style and no sense of tradition can never add up to meaning.

Jay Norman

FROM THE GALLERY

1. Paraphrasing Raymond Chandler—In the first place I'm hopelessly prejudiced in favour of the company, in the second place I think Balanchine to be the world's greatest choreographer, in the third place I'm prejudiced in the first place.

2. This prejudice is largely based on the soundest of reasons—I like dancing.

3. The non-Balanchine repertory (apart from Ashton and Robbins) was second-rate.

4. Tallchief, Le Clercq, Hayden, Moncion, Robbins and Bliss would be assets to any company; Reed and Lang were fine in the right roles; Wilde, Tompkins, Roy Tobias, Robert Barnett and Yvonne Mounsey stood out in the smaller parts. Apart from these the dancing was more notable for its enthusiasm than its achievement.

5. The men nearly all seemed better partners than dancers. Is this significant?

6. On the whole I like ballets to have a décor.

7. *Concerto Barocco* looked much less like a great ballet than when it was performed by de Cuevas. I wonder if any of the ballets we had not seen before were also given a performance that did them less than justice?

8. No visiting company since the war has deserved a greater artistic success, or had a repertory even approaching in quality that shown by this company (even though it is at the moment over-balanced with Balanchine).

9. The company is young. In ten years time we will really be able to judge it. It could do with more Ashton and some Tudor in its repertory.

10. If people will fight to get in to see *Coppelia* (however well danced) and yet stay away from some of the masterpieces of the contemporary ballet-theatre, what hope is there for ballet? This is as much a problem for Sadler's Wells as for anybody.

Clive Barnes

COPLAND *Composer of America*

AARON COPLAND is possibly the outstanding American composer of this era. He has written opera, chamber music and symphonies which have all been successful, and above all he has written very fine scores to dance to. In fact Copland's greatest works have been for dancing: *Hear Ye, Hear Ye; Billy the Kid; Music for the Theatre* (seen in the repertoire of the New York City Ballet Company)*; Rodeo; Appalachian Spring*; and *El Salon Mexico* has also been danced, as have numerous of his smaller compositions.

The above list is an important one. Three of the works are accepted masterpieces—all presented themes of American character, and all but one were choreographed by Americans. The importance of Aaron Copland in modern American classic and free dance may be compared with that of Stravinsky in the Diaghilev era. If indeed an American school of music is coming into being, Copland—who was trained in America and France—is one of the formative mentors and a leading exponent of it. The very works which have made good ballet have also made outstanding concert pieces, and frequently they are played in the concert hall, as are so many of Stravinsky's ballets. It should be understood that mention of Stravinsky along with Copland is not intended to link their styles but to attempt to clarify the position of Aaron Copland in current music.

Aaron Copland was brought into the dancing theatre by Ruth Page in 1934. Together with the designer N. Remisow they created the one act ballet, *Hear Ye, Hear Ye*—based on the murder of a night club dancer. Three witnesses are called: the chorus girl, the honeymooner and the waiter, and they each give a version of the crime committed. Finally justice is accomplished in a mock way, and the dancer's partner is freed of suspicion. This work was not particularly successful and has not remained in the repertoire.

The next ballet for which Copland composed the music was *Billy the Kid*, created for Lincoln Kirstein's Ballet Caravan in 1938 and now given by American National Ballet Theatre. By now a classic, it is possibly the outstanding music for a North American ballet. It is terse, tense and quickly moving, even outside the theatre. The various sections: opening march, Billy kills his first man to protect his mother, riding the range, the ambush at the home of his mysterious Mexican sweetheart and the closing march, are pictorial and yet suggestive in their use of western themes far beyond the evocative sentimental "folk songs" in themselves, which Copland uses, but develops—again in much the same way Stravinsky used Russian themes in *Petrouchka*. The symbols are magnificently accented by the score. The legend and fact of Billy the Kid come to life in the most imaginative way. To Loring's masterpiece Copland has provided his own texture and the blend is one of genius. The ballet is at once real and make believe. There is no talking down to the spectator, yet all is clear. There are no set *soli* or *pas*, except for Billy, yet the form is there, indubitably, and brilliantly.

Both the dramatic and dance action reflect the theme which is so well expressed by the spacious music which Copland fashioned from the frontier songs. The entire work is spare, but incredibly rich in imaginative art.

In 1941 Lincoln Kirstein again called on Copland—this time to use his Music for the Theatre (1928), a ballet which Antony Tudor choreographed as *Time Table* for the American Ballet Caravan's South American goodwill tour.

The hit of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo's 1943 and subsequent seasons was *Rodeo or the Courting at Burnt Ranch*, in which Copland, Agnes De Mille, Oliver Smith and Kermit Love collaborated. Here Copland's score, slightly less serious than Billy, unbent and suited perfectly the basic theme of "a girl who goes for me". In the American southwest the hands get together to rope, ride, brand, show off, and finally have an old fashioned Saturday dance with the women who have gathered to pick out their men. As Agnes De Mille has said this is a universal theme, and also redolent of American soil. In the cowboy locale there was a general folk basis, less frontier than Billy and gayer. There was no sense of large tragedy, and in fact the happy ending is hinted at by the numerous comic bits. And throughout there is a happy marriage of square dancing and classic technique.

For America's great dancer Martha Graham Aaron Copland has produced *Appalachian Spring*. Ever since its first performance in 1944 it has had great success and deservedly so. Here Copland has gotten away completely from the cowboy angle of American folk tradition and concentrated on wider aspects of frontier life. Though Martha Graham has indicated a puritan atmosphere, this work is extremely good theatre.

One wonders in what direction will turn the future works of this composer who has contributed more masterpieces to dance than any other American composer.

Baird Hastings

John Kriza and Norma Vance in Billy the Kid. *The role of the girl who is Billy's sweetheart, was danced by Alicia Alonso in the recent Covent Garden season.* Billy the Kid *created by Eugene Loring for Lincoln Kirstein in* 1938, *was one of the first Americana ballets and influenced Agnes de Mille and Jerome Robbins.*

The story is about the famous desperado who flourished in America at the end of the last century.

Copland's score is fresh and vigorous, has a remarkable pioneering spirit, and wonderfully suggests the wide open spaces where to live a man has to be quick on the trigger

(*Photo: Alfredo Valente*)

Copland's compositions for ballet are as follows :—

1934 Hear Ye! Hear Ye! (*for Ruth Page*)
1938 Billy The Kid (*for Eugene Loring*)
1941 Time Table (*for Antony Tudor*)
1942 Rodeo (*Agnes de Mille*)
1943 El Salon Mexico (*for Doris Humphrey*)
1944 Appalachian Spring (*for Martha Graham*)
1947 Day on Earth (*for Doris Humphrey*)

Bartholin returns home

Danish choreographer back in the land of his birth runs school and creates new ballets

by
Tatlock Miller

BIRGER BARTHOLIN
(*Photo: Lindequist*)

GUEST choreographer to the Royal Opera House, Copenhagen, Birger Bartholin, the well-known Danish dancer and creator of many modern ballets has been visiting London and those who know both him and his work are hopeful that the near future will see at least one of his ballets produced and performed in London and by an English company.

As both a choreographer and as a designer his is a talent which always understates. His touch is slight, light and airy in the evoking of a romantic or satiric mood. In their search for the new, as he himself told me, present-day makers of ballet are returning continuously and more and more to the past and are finding their expression in the classic formula. His own background is rich with experience and the traditions of classic ballet.

Born in Odense, the birthplace of Hans Andersen, as a young boy he wanted to become a dancer but, like so many others, was dissuaded by his parents. He began his career as an art student in Paris under Andre Lhote and Friez but when he saw the Diaghilev Company there, with Idzikovsky, Woizikovski and Dolin he realised again that to dance must be his life.

Returning home to Denmark he took lessons from Fokine, who was then guest choreographer to the Royal Opera House, Copenhagen. Fokine told him that if he wished to study seriously he must go back to Paris and study under Legat and Egorova. With Legat, Bartholin received his first technical foundation and from him went to Volinine.

In 1928 he joined the Ida Rubenstein Company at the Paris Opera. Nijinska and Massine were the choreographers and from them and especially from the former he learned a strict and excellent discipline. In this company were Frederick Ashton, William Chappell, Rupert Doone and Lichine, Shabelevsky, Jasinsky and Viltzak. It was Ida Rubenstein who made possible the creation of a number of great ballets, the famous *Bolero*, of Ravel, his *La Valse*, Sauget's *David* and Stravinsky's *Baiser de la Fee*.

Dancing in the Rubenstein company for a year, he toured with them to Venice, Monte Carlo, Brussels and Rome.

Nemtchinova, with Obhoukoff and Nicolai Zvereff, formed a company in 1929 and he danced with them in a repertoire of classics,

Poul Gnatt and his sister Kirsten Ralov in the witty baroque pas de deux *from* Symphonie Classique
(*Photo: Mydskov*)

touring again to Italy. Never, he says, has Nemtchinova's *Swan Lake* been surpassed, with its effortless, faultless *fouettés*. From this he went to a new company formed by Boris Kniaseff, with Blinova, Lichine and Shabelevsky, leaving to join Serge Gregorieff's small company performing at the Casino in Monte Carlo and for whom Petroff was ballet master.

In 1931 he returned home to Denmark to give his first recital made up of dances which had been made for him by both Egorova and Nijinska as well as others of his own. It was his earliest essay as choreographer.

Sent for by Massine, to dance in the famous Max Reinhardt production of *The Miracle*, with Lady Diana Cooper and Tilly Losch, for which Massine arranged the dances, at the Lyceum, he made his first journey to England, returning to Denmark for another recital before touring England for a year as the Spielman in *The Miracle*.

The Bartholin Ballet Company was then formed in Copenhagen, with Lucienne Lambelle, prima ballerina from the Paris Opera, and the American dancer Ruth Chanova and he presented his own ballets *Rhapsody in Blue* and *Marriage à la Mode*, to music of a young contemporary Danish composer and with décor and costumes by the artist Sven Johansen.

In 1934 he was with the Epstein Ballet, danced in Paris and went on a long tour which included North Africa, the following year becoming a member of the Rene Blum Monte Carlo Ballet which had Fokine as ballet master and Nemtchinova as prima ballerina. For them Fokine made his *Don Juan*, *L'Epreuve d'amour* and Balanchine arranged his *Aubade*. With the Colonel de Basil Russian Ballet he visited Australia and danced as a leading soloist. Here, too, he held exhibitions of his décor and costume designs which showed him to be an extremely sensitive, subtle and sophisticated designer. For the three years before the war he was ballet master and choreographer to the Ballet de la Jeunesse.

In 1940 he re-formed his own company of thirty dancers in Denmark and created *Symphonie Classique* to Prokoviev, designing the décor and costumes himself as well as dancing the leading role. He then made *Les Bronzes*, to music of Nikolai Stein, with décor by Barett and a scenario by Ivrenov. This was a romantic work and the leading parts danced by Skibine, Moulin and Leskova. This was followed by his *Romeo and Juliet*, which is probably his most outstanding work as a choreographer, and *Infanta*, after a story of Oscar Wilde and *Trois Images* to music of Lizst, Albeniz and Debussy. His *The Lion Tamer*, to music of Sauget, was a satire on dictators.

Bartholin now has his own ballet school in Copenhagen and this year revived his *Symphonie Classique* at the Royal Opera where his *Romeo and Juliet* will be presented this autumn. Perhaps it is this work of his which we should most like to see presented here.

Another group from Bartholin's Symphonie Classique *to Prokofieff's score of the same name The charming costumes were designed by the choreographer himself. The four figures in the centre are Stanley Williams, Fredbjohn Bjornsson, Margrethe Schanne, and Kjeld Noack*
(*Photo: Mydskov*)

New Ballets

THE BRITISH DANCE THEATRE

The British Dance Theatre has its home at the Art of Movement studio in Manchester. Their first performance in London was on television on September 18. It is likely that the company may give some performances in a London theatre in the very near future. The importance of this company is that it perpetuates the technique founded on the research of the famous modern dance creator. Rudolph Von Laben. One of his most talented pupils, Liza Ullman, started the school and Hettie Loman is carrying on the work.

Above: Sally Archbutt as the Daughter, Ronnie Curran as the Son, and Valerie Preston as the Mother in Hettie Loman's ballet, The Divided *to Samuel Barber music*

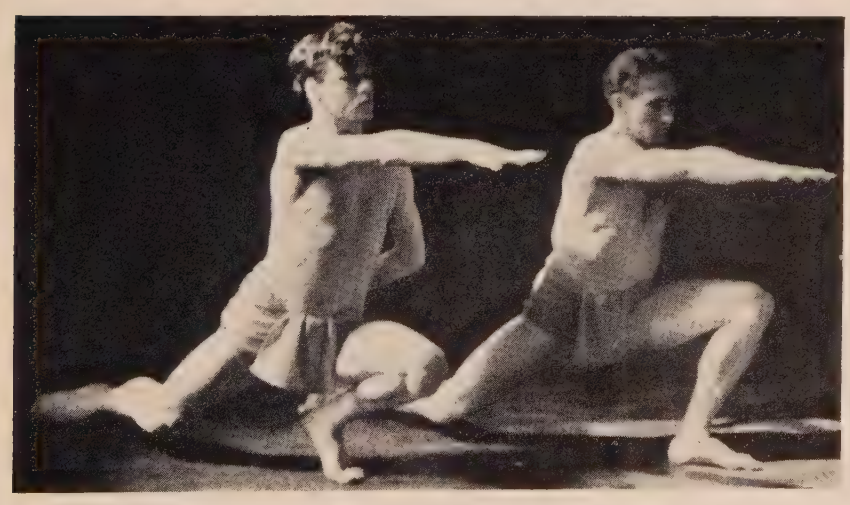
" *And in the distance*
I heard his footsteps
slowly fade
And knew the sudden relaxation
of the stubborn will "

Above: Joan Carrington and Ronnie Curran in the Masquerade of the Heart. *Choreography by Hettie Loman to music of Khachturian's* Gayeneh Suite

Below: Clare Summer as the Flirt and Ronnie Curran as the Delinquent in Hettie Loman's Streets without end *to the music of Revualtas, Sibelius, and Britten*

Below: Ronnie Curran and Warren Lamb in the Song of the Earth, *which has choreography by Hettie Loman and music to Bach's Toccata and Fugue in A*

" *I drank deep from the rich brown earth.*
Listened to its laughter and felt good.
Saw the birth of wheat-gold burst their
seed soon after,
And life swelled strong where I stood."



SUPER-HOOFER

Two bits of metal.—A hank of whip-cord—and a great personality, in Leicester Square

by Peter Williams

No history of the dance would be complete without a chapter on Fred Astaire. Not even two years retirement could dim the lustre of one whose polished perfection has made him the world's best exponent of his own particular art—the number one dancer of the light stage and screen.

He was born on May 10, 1899. Married Phyllis Potter in 1933. Has a daughter Ava, aged six ; a son Fred, jnr., aged twelve ; a stepson Peter, aged nineteen.

Fred's sister, Adele, is eighteen months his senior. She appeared with her brother for many years but retired from the stage when she married Lord Charles Cavendish in 1932. After he died she married Kingman Douglass in 1947.

The Twenties

The era of Bright Young Things, Jazz, and Charleston, is in full swing. That form of entertainment known as Musical Comedy is at its zenith with its second act inevitably a bougonvillia dripping Lido inhabited by people dressed in beach pyjamas. In Leicester Square, the Edwardian glory lingers; the golden cupolas of the Alhambra reflect the bright lights. Across the road the Empire, home of Marie Lloyde and Adeline Genée, still carries its aura of raffish sanctity. All too soon to vanish into the rapacious jaws of moviedom, it goes down with colours gallantly flying for the Astaires have come to town in Lady Be Good *for which a young Mr. Gershwin has written some catchy tunes. The combination of all three makes a lanky young schoolboy think he has received a heavenly visitation.*

FRED and Adele Austerlitz had conquered New York many years before but this was the first time that London had a chance to see them. Born in Omaha, Nebraska, they came of parents who had nothing to do with the theatre. By the time they were seven and eight respectively, they were the local sensation as a brother and sister act. Soon after this, their mother took them to New York and at Ned Wayburn's school Fred proved to be as good at tap as at classical dancing. Soon they were both on a vaudeville circuit giving three shows a day as " Fred and Adele Astaire, in new songs and smart dances " —the name of Astaire had now been legalised. So they continued for nine years touring the whole length and breadth of America gradually working up to the top of the bill, frequently in the same programme as other names that are now household words—Sophie Tucker mentions in her book, *Some of these days* (one of the best books ever written about show business) that she appeared on billswith them.

America was just entering World War 1 when Fred and Adele first hit Broadway in *Over the Top*. Successes followed in swift succession—*For Goodness' Sake*, *Smiles*, *Lady be Good*, all names that have gone to make musical comedy history. After the latter closed in London, they returned several years later in *Funny Face* in which they starred with Leslie Henson, a new comedian called Sydney Howard, and more tunes by that Mr. Gershwin who had now risen to become the world's number one song writer. The run of this musical might have continued almost indefinitely had the theatre not taken it into its head to blow up one dark evening without doing bodily harm to anyone.

It was Adele who dominated the partnership with her wonderful sense of humour. She started a new style of *soubrette* with her tiny shoes with big bows (a fashion later copied by Emma Haig, Sunny Jarman and Zelma O' Neill). So it was all the sadder for Fred when his sister decided to leave the stage for good and settle down in Ireland as the wife of Lord

Extreme left: Fred and Adele as they appeared in Bandwaggon *on Broadway in* 1931. *This was the last musical play in which they appeared together*
Left: With Ginger Rogers in the Cheek to Cheek *number from the film,* Top Hat, *in* 1935. *This was one of their greatest successes*

The film was re-released recently and it was found to have lost none of its original charm. Though some of the dresses were obviously dated, the general construction and wit remained. Rarely has a film combined song and dance with such amusing situations

(*Photo: R.K.O.*)

FRED ASTAIRE

Charles Cavendish. Now Fred was on his own, nervous and apprehensive as to how the world would receive only half the apple.

The Thirties

Leicester Square again in the disillusioned thirties. The Empire now in its full, and surprisingly dignified glory as Britain's number one talkie cinema (100% *talking, dancing and singing*). *The ever-lengthening tentacles of celluloid are tightening their grip on the old square and the days of the Alhambra are numbered, though it has a few more years to go with glorious seasons of ballet. The gilt of the cupolas is quickly dimming. The hayday of the musical comedy is over, the seventh wave of the 'twenties has subsided, and in its place we have rather pretentious "play with music". Gone are those lively, high-kicking, well-drilled, chorus girls. The bougainvillia and wistaria have faded and dropped their petals. In place of the nonsensical but charming gaiety we now are in the throes of the clever-clever period.*

The lanky school-boy, now an equally lanky art student, has played truant from his art school on a very warm afternoon in order to see Joan Crawford's Dancing Lady. *This super-epic* (*everything was so-called in those days*) *was winding its expensive way to the close when it suddenly came alive on account of a lithe figure tapping his heart and soul out for about* 120 *seconds, on the edge of a luxurious swimming pool. Fred Astaire was back in a new medium.*

VERY soon he was back in person in *Gay Divorce* at the Palace Theatre. With blonde Clare Luce, he danced over tables and chairs, he danced to the tunes of witty Mr. Cole Porter, he danced to the best number that this century has yet produced—*Night and Day*.

His success in his first picture led to him being starred in *Flying down to Rio* in which he found a new partner—a young ginger-headed hoofer called Rogers. Together they danced a South American number, *The Carioca*. It was this number which made Fred realise that dancing had a future on films and if properly treated could be as effective as in a "live" performance. Up to now the dance had not been satisfactory on the screen. All dance sequences had been cut up—you would be shown close-ups of a dancer's face, his feet, his hands, trick shots and odd camera angles, all of which destroyed the flow of the dance. Fred quite rightly felt that if the full body was kept in action before the camera, the flow would be retained and the audience could also concentrate on intricate steps that are frequently lost in the theatre.

The question of finding a new partner to replace Adele seemed to be solved. He started to groom Ginger Rogers and coach her until she became the best partner that man ever had. She was far more than a partner, she became an integral part of the performance. In later years, when the partnership was breaking up, Miss Rogers said that Fred was such a good dancer that he only had to twirl anybody round to make them an acceptable partner. She was, to a certain extent, wrong; it was her own grace and sense of comedy, only acquired over many years of working with the same person, that made this partnership unique in the history of dance partnerships.

Together they made a series of musicals that were the high-water mark of light entertainment in the 'thirties, and even when these films are shown to-day (*Top Hat* was recently released again) they are infinitely superior to anything that we see now and it is not just a case of 'time clothing the past with majesty' for the film does not lie and here we have proof-positive. In 1934 there was *Gay Divorce* with the persistent *Night and Day* and a new dance,

Fred, as he is to-day, in his most recent film, Three Little Words. *He stars with Vera-Ellen* (*Photo : M.G.M.*)

The Continental. In the following year *Roberta* with Jerome Kern's best score, followed in the autumn with *Top Hat*, the film that evolved from a single dance routine of Freds'. In 1936 there was *Follow the Fleet* with more tunes from Jerome Kern; and later in that year *Swing Time* with a golfing and roller-skating number. George Gershwin cropped up again in 1938 as composer of *Shall we Dance*, and after that Jerome Kern wrote the last score he was to write for the two of them in *Carefree* with yet another new dance number, *The Yam*. As the second World War approached they made the film of the life of those two great dancers of before the first cataclysm—Vernon and Irene Castle. Vernon was tragically killed in 1918 which broke up that partnership. This film ended the Astaire-Rogers partnership and Ginger went "straight".

The Forties and Fifties

Bombs and a general deterioration, that is typical of to-day, have altered the face of Leicester Square. The bombs have not saved us from the revolting building that replaced the old Alhambra; this new monstrous edifice flaunts its vulgarity as a monument to the lack of taste for which this generation should for ever be damned. In place of the gay and friendly ladies which made the square famous, the spiv, barrow and other boys, blatantly flaunt their wares. Where champagne was sipped out of shoes, coca-colas are now sucked through straws.

The musical comedy now called "the musical" has entered a folksy and homey period—in place of titled persons, mannequins, and fashionable resorts, we have low-life on the farm, wimsey-wamsey, and adaptations from straight plays. All these sweeping

(*continued overleaf*)

Left: With Eleanor Powell in the Cole Porter number, Begin the Beguine, *from* Broadway Melody of 1940 (*Photo: M.G.M.*)

continued from page fifteen

changes seem to have made little difference to Astaire, who under the banner of Metro Goldwyn Mayer continues to dance in a more lively manner than he did when he first danced at the Empire twenty five years ago.

SINCE the Astaire-Rogers partnership broke up in 1939, Fred has had a number of partners but the combination has never been so complete as with Ginger. Eleanor Powell who danced with him in *Broadway Melody of* 1940 was a far better dancer but the art of the two never quite dovetailed so it was their separate numbers that were the most outstanding. Rita Hayworth was far more beautiful but in *You were never lovlier* (1942), although she danced well, she lacked personality.

Probably the nearest to Ginger was Judy Garland who appeared with him in *Easter Parade*, she not only danced well but also had a personality that fitted well into Fred's own particular brand of humour and it is a pity that these two could not be teamed up in more films.

Coming out of Fred's most recent film Three Little Words, *the lanky school boy now a middle-aged editor and designer paused to think—*

He had been seeing ballet for almost thirty years, he had seen most of the great dancers of our time with the exception of Nijinsky. He had seen the full flowering of that art known as ballet. Yet, after all the shouting and excitement had died Astaire was the one dancer who had given him the greatest pleasure over the greatest number of years. Confirmed ballet-maniacs might throw their hand up in horror but it is impossible to escape the fact that dancing is movement to music, and to music Fred moves more perfectly and rhythmically than anyone else. It matters not that the particular music is Kern and not Tchaikovsky, Gershwin and not Bach, the fact remains that Fred fulfills completely his function as a dancer. It his genius that has turned a rather limited form of dance into something that is always fresh and vital. In all his films he comes up with something original...

Two months before shooting starts on a new film he starts putting his new ideas into steps before a mirror. After several weeks of this, during which he works for never less than six hours a day, he calls in his partner. Together they go through one routine at a time in front of mirrors, then they add bits and polish off others until they are satisfied. Much in the same way that a painstaking author will write and re-write a story. This care has been apparent in almost every dance—as for example his sand dance in the *No strings* number in *Top Hat*; the roller skating dance in *Swing Time* together with the golf ball number in the same film; the dance with drums in *Damsel in Distress*, his dance on the bar in *You'll never get rich*; his every number with Ginger Rogers; right up to the present day with his slow-motion dance in *Easter Parade* and his *Mr. and Mrs. Hoofer at Home* in his most recent film *Three Little Words*.

He may not be a great actor and he may not have a remarkable voice but he has so much personality that he convinces the audience that he is well endowed with both these qualities and if other artists try to imitate him, or put over his numbers, they fail dismally.

That is why, in a changing world, we salute the artist who age has not dimmed. May he continue to delight us for many years to come.

THROUGH THE YEARS——

STAGE :

1917 to 1933	*Over the Top* *Passing Show of* 1918 *Apple Blossoms* *For Goodness Sakes* *Lady Be Good* *Funny Face* *Smiles* *The Band Wagon* *The Gay Divorce*

SCREEN :

1933	*Dancing Lady*, *Flying Down to Rio*
1934	*The Gay Divorce*
1935	*Roberta*, *Top Hat*
1936	*Follow the Fleet*, *Swing Time*
1937	*Shall we Dance*, *A Damsel in Distress*
1938	*Carefree*
1939	*The Story of Vernon and Irene Castle* *Broadway Melody of* 1940
1940	*Second Chorus*
1941	*You'll Never Get Rich*
1942	*Holiday Inn*, *You Were Never Lovelier*
1943	*The Sky's the Limit*
1944	*Ziegfeld Follies*
1945	*Yolanda and the Thief*
1946	*Blue Skies*
1948	*Easter Parade*, *The Barkley's of Broadway*
1949	*Let's Dance*
1950	*Three Little Words*
(1951)	*Royal Wedding*

Astaire with Judy Garland as A Couple of Swells *from Irving Berlin's* Easter Parade. *This film made in* 1948 *showed that Judy Garland was one of the best partners he had had since the Astaire-Rogers partnership broke up in* 1939 *(Photo : M.G.M.)*

In Let's Dance *with Betty Hutton. This film was made in* 1949, *but it is probable that it will be first shown in London at the same time as* Three Little Words. *Betty Hutton is Fred's fifteenth partner and it will be interesting to see how this great comedienne compares with the others (Photo: Paramount)*

Curtain Up!

At a party given after the first night of Le Grand Ballet de Marquis de Cuevas in Paris. Round the table from left to right are John Taras, Milorad Mishkovitch, Harriet Toby, Madame Pagava, Serge Lido and Ethery Pagava (Photo: W. Oukhtomsky)

We have never been in any doubt of the fact that the Gallery is the dancer's best friend, it is also the best critic. In other theatres those people nearest to the gods, may make a rude noise on first nights but in London's ballet theatres and the English provinces they are loyal and faithful to the dancers who have given them pleasure over the years. It was a real act of kindness and friendship for the Gallery at Covent Garden to send each of the girls, including soloists, a bouquet on the last night of the New York City Ballet season. Every bouquet had a label with the following words: "In gratitude and with admiration for your wonderful dancing throughout the season, from your friends in the Gallery. Please come back." It is acts such as this that do more to cement friendship between nations than any other.

PATRICIA WILDE, answering for the company, has sent the following letter :—

Dear Peter,

I hope you can find space in Dance and Dancers for this letter as I want our friends in the Gallery and Amphitheatre to know how much their flowers meant to us. To know we have made such friends on our first visit is indeed heart-warming, and their generous tokens of appreciation made our stay here quite memorable. We all look forward to an early return and a chance of meeting you all again.

Sincerely,
PATRICIA WILDE.

★

Few dancers go through life without embarrassing moments and NATALIE KRASSOVSKA (now dancing with Dolin's Gala Performances of Ballet) is no exception. When she was with Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo in America, she was dancing with Massine in *Capriccio Espagnol*. As she came on she felt her skirt falling off so grabbing it in as Spanish an attitude as she could muster, she danced off into the wings to have it put right. She returned a few minutes later in a very authentic Spanish pose when, unfortunately, the same thing happened again. Three times this little drama was enacted and the audience was quite oblivious of what was going on. Massine, left alone on the stage, was not so pleased as he had to improvise in the absence of his partner.

★

At Aldershot recently one of the education lectures, now given regularly to the army, was a general one on ballet. The Army Education Corps Sergeant in charge said, "In ballet all the women dancers are called ballerinas and the male dancers are called balletomanes."

Although we are very glad to think that the Army consider ballet to be part of a soldier's general education, we rather feel that many more mistakes of this kind and the rubbish that is usually talked about the art will be more confusing than ever.

★

Overheard in the Gallery bar after the first night of Balanchine's *Orpheus* at Covent Garden:

"What did you think of that, dear?"

"Well, the one that was doing the chief part did not seem to know it very well—the other man had to lead him everywhere." (To those who have not seen the ballet, Orpheus is led to and from Hades by the Angel of Death).

★

The adventures of four members of New York City Ballet, PATRICIA WILDE, NICHOLAS MAGALLANES, ROY TOBIAS and FRANK HOBI, during their recent week's holiday, would make Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat* look like a gentle stroll down a country lane.

In a hired car they started off for the Isles of Scilly. After they had gone a few miles outside London they noticed everyone pointing at them, so they got out to find they had a flat tyre. That was soon put right and they started off again. A few miles farther on they ran into a milk lorry that failed to signal; then another car ran into them.

After that things went quite well until they got to Launceston where they thought they would go to the top of the castle to see the sunset and were so overcome by the beauty that they dallied, little knowing that the perils of Bodmin moors awaited them. When they got there the fog had rolled up pretty nicely so they crawled along with wild ponies charging at them from all sides. To their horror they suddenly came to Jamaica Inn (sinister background of Daphne du Maurier's novel) so they hurried past that to Bodmin, where they could not find a room for the night. Several miles on, after hearing someone else being directed to a farm with rooms to let, they rushed ahead forestalling the man who had been enquiring, and after wandering through ploughed fields and dirty farmyards, they eventually found rooms.

On their arrival at Lands End the next day they were greeted with the news that the hotel in Scilly could not take them. However, undaunted, they flew over and spent another feverish evening looking for somewhere to sleep in an already overcrowded island. When they had almost given up all hope they finally got rooms that had neither light or water. However, they say they enjoyed the whole thing and that it was a wonderful holiday!

★

It has been obvious, for some time, that many companies have no idea what ballets they are dancing. At a matinee of the Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas at the Edinburgh Festival, a change of programme was announced thus : " The role of Prince Ziegfield in *Swan Lake* this afternoon will be danced by Serge Golovine In *Bien Danube*, the role of the First Hand will be danced by Tania Karina ".

The new administration probably wants new names so it was a thoughtful touch to follow the example of the Marquis and bestow a princedom on the late, ever-lamented, Flo.

This *Bien Danube* was not so *bien* on the opening night of the season for in the middle, for no apparent reason, the back-cloth was suddenly raised about ten feet from the stage. The view of drab flats stacked up, ladders, and stage hands idly lounging around, seemed far from the gay Prater.

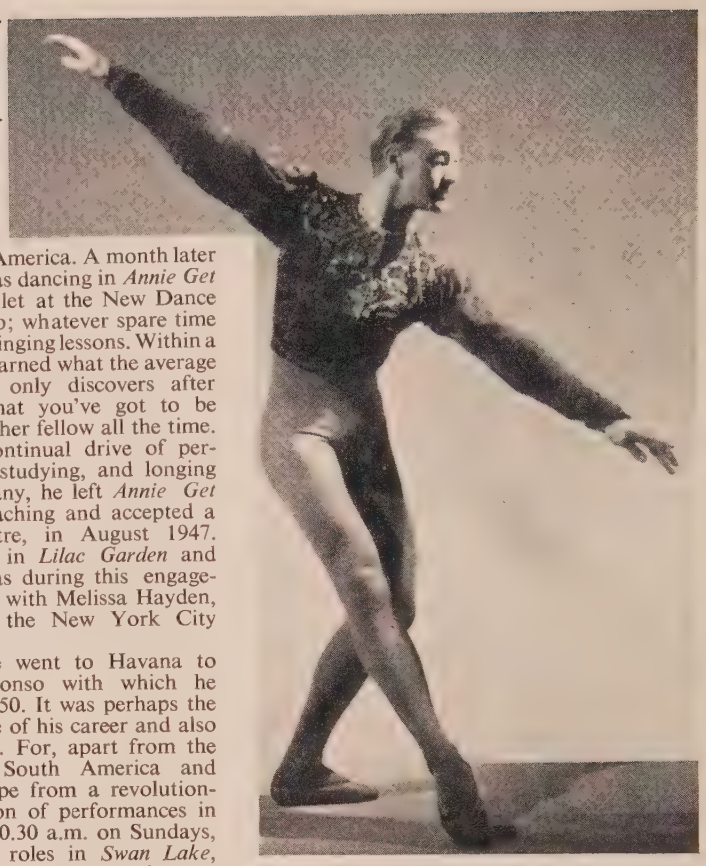
★

To some critics of Balanchine :—

You say his ballets leave you cold—
But why should that astound you ?
Why blame a choreographer
Who leaves you as he found you ?

Another table at the same party. Round the table from left to right: F. Lacloche Marjorie Tallchief, Alain Vigot (new stage director), The Marquis de Cuevas, George Skibine, Cloze (the conductor) and Rosella Hightower. (Photo: W. Oukhtomsky)

Dancers you should know



MICHAEL MAULE

(*Photo: Montero*)

Who, in his wildest dreams, would suspect Africa the land of Zulus, wild game and vast jungle terrain, as a breeding place for male ballet dancers; yet, in its own quiet way, it has produced many. Thus, it is more surprising that one should turn up as a member of an American company performing in Britain.

Michael Maule, who is in the New York City Ballet, has been dancing since he was three, for the simple reason that there are still, born dancers. He is a living proof that even the resentment and scorn of an ignorant populace cannot alter what is inate in you. He recalls vividly the boorish behavior of a South African audience when, as a child, he appeared in a programme of ballet in Johannesburg. His entrance on stage was greeted with boos and threats, gradually subsiding into acceptance and even approval.

Now twenty-six, he has reddish hair (not the offensive kind), penetrating blue-grey eyes that bear the imprint of suffering and much serious contemplation and a pale complexion that is the trademark of hard-working dancers. Often suspected of being Irish, he is of solid Scottish descent, his mother's family belonging to the Douglas clan.

A nervous child, his dance training began as a form of therapy recommended by a doctor. Pearl Adler, a Johannesburg teacher, was responsible for his initial training; then he went to Nancy Hooper and Eileen Keegan, of that same city, for advanced work.

In 1941, when he was seventeen, he joined the Navy, an experience which nearly changed the course of his life. Fascinated by the skill exercised in removing his appendix he was frequently drawn to the operating room aboard ship to observe other operations. He decided that he wanted to be a surgeon. After his release from the Navy he embarked on a course of study that would eventually lead to this, but realizing his inaptitude he took recourse to dancing.

In a chance meeting with Anton Dolin in 1945, he was advised of the opportunities awaiting dancers in New York, and was persuaded to go there. Upon his arrival he enrolled in the classes of Vincezo Celli, one of the few teachers of the Cechetti method in America. A month later in January of 1946, he was dancing in *Annie Get Your Gun*, teaching ballet at the New Dance Group and Celli's studio; whatever spare time remained he devoted to singing lessons. Within a short space of time he learned what the average dancer in New York only discovers after years of experience—that you've got to be one step ahead of the other fellow all the time.

Worn out by the continual drive of performing, teaching and studying, and longing to be in a ballet company, he left *Annie Get Your Gun*, gave up teaching and accepted a job with Ballet Theatre, in August 1947. Tudor gave him roles in *Lilac Garden* and *Romeo and Juliet*. It was during this engagement that his friendship with Melissa Hayden, outstanding soloist in the New York City Ballet, began.

In October, 1948 he went to Havana to join Ballets Alicia Alonso with which he remained until May, 1950. It was perhaps the most exciting experience of his career and also proved a turning point. For, apart from the stimulating tours of South America and Mexico, a narrow escape from a revolution-ridden city and a season of performances in Havana given only at 10.30 a.m. on Sundays, he danced the leading roles in *Swan Lake*, *Aurora's Wedding*, *Giselle*, *Spectre de la Rose* and the pas de deux from *Don Quixote*, *Nutcracker* and the *Black Swan*. It was the sort of opportunity that occurs once in a millennium and for which he is eternally grateful to Alicia Alonso who foresaw his ability, encouraged and coached him in those very difficult roles.

A wire from Melissa Hayden, in June of this year, on behalf of George Balanchine, to join the New York City Ballet, brought him to New York from Mexico where he was performing with the Ballets Alicia Alonso. By July he was dancing for the first time in London and enjoying it.

Michael Maule is determined to get to the top as a classical dancer and judging from his attributes he stands a very good chance. A strong technique, expressive face and a penchant for hard work are his—supplied with the opportunities he will surely do it.

Music . . . . . by EVAN SENIOR

NOISES "ON"

Music is a form of sound; and sound, in some of its aspects, comes under the heading of music. That is one of the reasons why the use of sound in ballet is a matter for a music writer, and why I want to have something to say about the objectionable uses of sound in ballet.

WE all know the story about the man who went to the Sadler's Wells Ballet for the first time and commented, as he left, that he disliked it intensely because he couldn't hear a word.

Because of what ballet is, combining sight and sound, a ballet in complete silence is not, strictly speaking, a ballet at all. We saw that when, a couple of years ago, Lichine's *La Création* presented us with an interesting class-room exercise in planned movement. Ballet needs sound for its existence, but that sound should come from the musical part of the production, not from the stage. "Noises off" may be all very well in drama, but lately we have been having a great deal too many of these extraneous and unnecessary "noises on" in productions of ballet.

Some sound on the stage in ballet is permissable and necessary, as, for example, in a character dance of the type of a czardas where the strong stamping of the feet is actually part of the dance. But the sound I am talking about is the sound that so many choreographers tend, today, to introduce into the actual performance.

Even in recent ballets this tendency has been marked, and quite often we find it in performances of the older ballets, where it is all the more unnecessary. In Algo's *Visions*, produced a few months ago in London by International Ballet, Algeranoff in the role of the Procuress runs about beating heavily on the stage with a stick. In the last performance of *Giselle* I saw at Covent Garden the clash of arms of the Duke's huntsmen made distressingly loud noises. The general atmosphere, as well as the arm of the poet, is shattered by the actual firing of a revolver in *Les Illuminations*. The energetic young bathers in *Jones Beach* audibly shoo off the mosquitoes of the *scherzo* movement. And in addition to these, we often have other completely unnecessary sounds from the stage—long and ardent sighs, hissings and mouthings of words, not to mention the audible counting of bars that alone would take one back to the atmosphere of the classroom if the dancing did not!

Sound in ballet is the province of the music. In *Petrouchka*, Fokine had no need to make the puppet hammer audibly at the walls of his cell, or the bear thump heavily across the stage: Stravinsky had done that in the orchestra, much more effectively and much more artistically. There is no need for any mechanical ticking of clockwork for the figures in the second act of *Coppelia*: Delibes has provided that in the music. Hilarion does not have to blow the horn to summon the Duke in *Giselle*, and even the mosquitoes of *Jones Beach* are suggested in the orchestra much better than if the *corps-de-ballet* had been instructed to hum while flitting across the scene—which I had almost expected as an accompaniment to the shoo-ing of their victims! And if we are going to have the bang of the pistol in *Les Illuminations*, why not be equally logical and follow it with the inevitable cry of pain from the wounded poet? We already have most realistic blood on the lacerated arm, and from then onwards it is only a step to dialogue and spoken drama and the end of ballet as such.

Choreography must recognise its limitations: for the limitation is the golden frame within which every art flourishes and gains true perspective. The dance must realise today, as

dancing in musicals

3. *Touch and Go*

by

Richard Kayne

David Lober and Helen Gallagher in the Little Bar of Times Square *number* (*Photo: Landseer*)

IT seems that every new musical show from America, whether it be a revue or a "book-show", is automatically pre-destined to send critics and public alike into extravagant eulogies over the dancing. This has been again borne out in the reception given to *Touch and Go*, the revue at the Prince of Wales, the dances of which were arranged by Helen Tamaris, one of Broadway's foremost choreographers.

It should be stated at once that Miss Tamaris merits all the praise she can get. Her ideas are fresh, original and exciting, and she is able to convey, exactly what she wishes to say with subtlety, individuality, and economy of movement and gesture.

For many years she toured America and Europe at the head of her own company, later appearing with success at the Salzburg Festival. During the war she arranged the dances for many Broadway musical shows including the 1946 revival of *Show Boat*, *Up in Central Park* and of course *Annie get your Gun*. Since *Touch and Go* she has worked on a new revue called *It's Great to be Alive*.

In her dances for *Touch and Go*, she paints a vivid cross-section of the American scene from the russet folksy Grant Wood village to the abrupt decadence of the sophisticated gambling den. Around the inevitable fate of the spinning roulette table, there has been woven all the futile helplessness of a sleek lady-gambler, (played by Kaye Ballard) and her losing battle against the ever-increasing odds. This scene which opens the second half of the show is nothing less than a *tour de force*.

There is a lyrical ballet set in Mexico *Under the Sleeping Volcano*, danced with wistful simplicity by Jonathan Lucas as Felipe; Helen Gallagher as Carita, his bethrothed; and David Lober as Francesco, the man she really loves.

Miss Gallagher originally leaped to fame as the maid in the American production of *High Button Shoes*, when she danced a fabulous tango with the son of the house—(a role played over here by Joan Heal).

David Lober, who plays the croupier in the gambling scene, is certainly one of the most exciting male dancers we have seen on the West End stage. His erotic jive ballet with Helen Gallagher in a bar situated off Times Square, is one of the best moments of the show, high-lighted as it is by the eccentric dancing of Jonathan Lucas as the bar-man.

Mention must be made of the Debonairs, five male tap-dancing satirists, whose precision timing would be an asset to any show.

The principal dancers are given more than adequate support by a chorus, who shine particularly brightly in a musical version of *Hamlet*, the lyrics of which are some of the most witty to be heard in London today. Apart from those already mentioned, the other dancers include Tamara Kirova, Howard Ludwig, Barbara Pearce, Douglas Scott and James Barron. Mary Anthony, herself one of the principal dancers of the show, re-staged the original choreography.

OTHER MUSICALS WITH DANCING.

Theatre	Title	Choreographer
Adelphi	*Golden City*	Robert Helpmann.
Cambridge	*Ace of Clubs*	Freddie Carpenter.
Drury Lane	*Carousel*	Agnes de Mille.
His Majesty's	*Brigadoon*	Agnes de Mille.
Palace	*King's Rhapsody*	Pauline Grant.
Stoll	*Oklahoma*	Agnes de Mille.
Victoria Palace	*Knights of Madness*	George Carden.

---

its finest creators and exponents realised in the past, that music is its collaborator and its equal in ballet, not merely its assistant and handmaiden.

Just a little less sound on the stage, please. Leave it to the composer.

Ballet Composer Returns

Back in Britain after some years abroad, composer STANLEY BATE *had some interesting points to raise recently about music in ballet. He can speak from practical experience, having spent much of his time in writing music for ballet.*

To create good ballet", he said, composer and choreographer must work together, each one contributing to the main end. The composer must understand the technique of choreography, and the choreographer must understand much more than he usually does about music. Far too often you find the choreography having nothing whatever to do with the music, the result being ballet which may look all right to dancers, but which is quite unsatisfactory to anyone with the slightest knowledge of music".

Stanley Bate has a musical background which eminently fits him for comment on the ballet world. In addition to his musical training at the Royal College of Music, study under Vaughan Williams, Nadia Boulanger and Paul Hindemith, he has spent much time in the practical realm of ballet and has written music for ballet in this country and in America.

He wrote the music for *Cap Over Mill*, with choreography by Walter Gore, produced by Ballet Rambert in 1939, and also for the ballet *Perseus*, which was seen at the Lyric Hammersmith, in 1940.

In America, he wrote the music for the Ballet Society production of *Highland Fling*. This was created to a story by Balanchine, with choreography by William Dollar. It is to be produced again shortly, this time with choreography by Balanchine himself.

In the years since he left Britain Stanley Bate has pursued his career as a concert pianist in the United States, in South America and in Australia. In New York he appeared as soloist in Carnegie Hall under conductors of the calibre of Bruno Walter and Sir Thomas Beecham, while at the same time continuing composition, of concert works for piano and for orchestra, and of music for films and ballet.

Back in Britain, he plans to work as concert artist and also as composer.

"I believe that ballet has a firm hold in Britain", he said, "and that we have dancers capable of a very high standard. British ballet must produce more of its own work, and that work must incorporate the knowledge of the musician as well as that of the dancer. I hope that I shall have opportunities to contribute to ballet, for it needs the composer who understands it as much as it needs the choreographer".

BALLETS COMPOSED BY STANLEY BATES.

1935 *The Marriage of Eros.* Choreography, John Reagan. Produced at Grafton Theatre.

1939 *Perseus.* Choreography, John Reagan. Produced at Lyric, Hammersmith.

1940 *Perseus.* Revised with new music. Choreography, Keith Lester, Produced at Arts Theatre.

1940 *Cap Over Mill.* Choreography, Walter Gore. Produced by Ballet Rambert.

1948 *Highland Fling.* Book by Balancine. Choreography, William Dollar. Produced by New York Ballet Society.

1950 *Troilius and Cressida.* Choreography, Emy St. Just. Produced Hunter College, New York.

1950 *Dance Variations.* Abstract ballet commissioned by Igor Swetzoff. Awaiting production.

DANCERS OF SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET

(*Photo : Denis de Marney*)

DAVID POOLE

(*Photo : Felix Fonteyn*)

ELAINE FIFIELD

(*Photo : Gordon Anthony*)

SVETLANA BERIOSOVA

(*Photo : John Vickers*)

DAVID BLAIR

Dance and Dancers . . . . AT HOME

On the night before NEW YORK CITY BALLET finished their season at Covent Garden, John Cranko's *The Witch* was given its first performance. Of this work, to Ravel's piano concerto with décor by Dorothea Tanning, CLIVE BARNES writes :—

Just as every well-appointed home should have a wood-shed with "something horrible in it", so every well-appointed ballet company should have a repertory with something rather ghostly in it. You know the kind of thing; a young man, a young girl, then things happen to the young man that shouldn't happen to a dog, and everything, including the kitchen sink, starts to go bump in the night. Previous examples of this genre are *La Sylphide*, *Symphonie Fantastique*, *Apparitions*, *La Fiancee du Diable* and *Mardi Gras*. The latest recruit to these venerable ranks is John Cranko's *The Witch*.

Here the young man chooses as his soulmate a young lady with a most unladylike propensity towards witchcraft. She, abetted if not aided by two owls (who look like men) and two men (who look like bats), does him most shocking wrong and unwittingly leaves him cold upon the cold, cold ground. The story is as corny as Shredded Wheat and splendidly suitable for the ballet. It possesses the misty romanticism that goes to the anonymous roots of our literature and gave rise to Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and the fine Medieval ballads. Stories like this are the very stuff of imaginative poetry or, for that matter, ballet.

The ballet was well danced. Melissa Hayden was stunning as the bewitching girl, Francisco Moncion had grace and dignity as the bothered and bewildered suitor, and the rest of the cast performed their witch-hunt with the zeal normally associated with Republican senators. The ballet was well decorated. Dorothea Tanning had produced a setting evocative of bosky woods and castles drear, and costumes in some cases imaginative and in all cases acceptable. The lighting was excellent, particularly for the startlingly eerie opening group. All this was good yet the ballet was less than perfect. Why?

The main fault lay with Cranko's choreography. This was bitty and lacked cohesion, it was also without the directional drive that marks the best choreography. It meandered. The handling of the *corps de ballet* was noticeably weak, far too often it was allowed to wander into a characterless symmetry. The floor-patterns too were rather uninteresting. The choreographic climax came and went, but the music seemed to go on for ever. The ballet appeared to aim at the chic and experimental (possibly the choice of Ravel music had something to do with this—, while the theme called more for the romantic and conventional.

So much for the debits. On the credit side there is Cranko's quite amazing inventiveness (he must, however, remember that a movement is not necessarily good because it is new, and consider the lesson of last period Petit in this respect; his gift for telling a story entirely in terms of dancing rather than programme notes; and his talent for evoking atmosphere.

This is a ballet, well worth doing, that fell a little short of its mark. Judging it on the strictest of possible terms I personally feel it to be a failure, but in some falling short there is more promise than in many easy successes. If it should be revived for the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet (and I, for one, hope it will be), I should imagine a little tightening up of the choreography may work wonders.

SADLER'S WELLS BALLET gave a final week at Covent Garden from August 21 to 26, before leaving for America. The ballets given were those that have been left behind, so it was all the more welcome that owing to the courtesy of the Covent Garden Trust, the press were invited to the final performance consisting of *Les Sylphides*, *Ballabile*, and *Ballet Imperial*. We shall not be seeing the two latter works in this country for well over half a year:—

Last nights are always family occasions and usually any mistakes are turned into a huge joke; flowers and cheering make the performance appear more brilliant than it actually is. So I hope that it does not mean that I was really looking at it all through the eyes of a doting maiden aunt but I enjoyed the evening more than any since the Royal Command Gala for the French President.

Les Sylphides was well danced by Pamela May and Nadia Nerina, but as the moonlit sylphs continued on their intricate way a thought struck me—do any of the dancers (and this applies to every company) really know what they are supposed to be dancing? Do they realise that they are figments of a romantic poet's imagination, or the muses that inspire him? Judging by most performances I am certain that dancers look on it as an abstract ballet with a number of charming but formal patterns. How else can one account for those straight and unfluid backs, that lack of softness in the arm movements, the hard line of head and shoulders, the general air of unethereality. None of it helped by insensitive lighting and rather unromantic noises from the orchestra pit. Not that all these faults occur at the Garden where the ballet is almost faultlessly danced though it lacks feeling. If this quality continues to be lacking, the work will continue to be the crashing bore which is the way that most of the present generation think of it.

Having condemned Petit's *Ballabile* on almost every occasion I found myself looking on it in a new light. After the first performance of Balanchine's *Bourrée Fantasque* (which uses much of the same Chabrier music) one of those know-all photographers came up and said "at last, and for the first time, we have real comedy of movement". Personally I feel that humour sits uneasily in a Balanchine ballet and I cannot think of him as a man with a great sense of the ridiculous. This sense is in every fibre of Roland Petit and come naturally from him. Balanchine's use of Chabrier is tidy and clinical—the kaleidoscopic pattern are cyrstal clear. Petit, being a Frenchman, understands his own countryman better—his ballet is straggling and uneven, it has little construction, it switches from farce to pathos without reason but it is much better theatre. I still think that the *Sunday by the river* scene is wrong choreographically whereas the music is completely right. In the *Funeral in the rain* there is true comedy of movement. The Circus scene is still one of the best. *Visions of Spain*, though rich with possibility, remains weak owing to the fact that the previous scene is so energetic that the dancers are too exhausted to use that extra bit of fire which is needed for even a mock-Spanish dance.

Owing to a strained ligament, Anne Negus was unable to dance her usual role and her place was taken by Margaret Dale who romped through it all with a wonderful sense of fun (cannot this sense of humour which so many dancers in the company possess, be used more frequently ?). It may have been partly due to where I have sat in the past or to the fact that I was concentrating on other things but I had not really noticed Rowena Jackson properly before; her dancing in the *pas de trois* at the beginning of the circus scene was excellent—lovely clean turns and general finish. She would make a good Balanchine dancer.

I must confess that I approached *Ballet Imperial* with a certain amount of trepidation as we have had so much Balanchine abstraction of late. I need not have feared, it is still a great ballet and Fonteyn was wonderful in the principal role. She is now getting the "feel" of this ballet which escaped her at the first performances.

My remarks, a few months ago, about the rising standard of male dancing were amply born out by the *entrée* of the eight boys in the third movement of this ballet. Having seen most of what the West has to offer, I very much doubt if it would be possible to see better outside the U.S.S.R., unless perhaps in the Royal Danish Ballet.

Anita Landa as the Young Girl, Louis Godfrey as the Dandy, and Anna Cheselka as the First Hand, in Massine's Le Beau Danube. *This was revived by Anton Dolin's Gala Performances of Ballet on August* 14 *at The Kings Theatre, Southsea* (*Photo: Denis de Marney*)

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Whether *Ballet Imperial* would be such a good ballet if it had not decor, is hard to say. But I do know that one of the reasons that the evening was so satisfying was because again we were seeing works properly decorated. Concentrating on dancing against black curtains and cycloramas is very exhausting.

The company had a huge ovation at the end and the stage was heaped with the flowers which everyone deserved.

It is good to know that in the future there may be an exchange of male dancers between here and Denmark. Some dancers will come from the Royal Danish Ballet to dance at Covent Garden and we shall send come of ours there to dance at the Kings Theatre. It seems to be one of the most sensible ideas that anyone has thought up for a long time.

P W.

★

By the time this issue appears, the SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET will have returned to their own theatre for the winter season. Balanchine's *Trumpet Concerto* had its first London performance on the opening night of the season, September 19. We hope to be able to feature this in our next number. Our readers will be glad to know that Elaine Fifield has completely recovered from her recent illness and is with the company again.

★

David Paltenghi's new work, *St. Agnes Eve*, for BALLET RAMBERT had its *premiere* on Thursday August 31 at the Theatre Royal Bath, too late to review in this issue.

★

GALA PERFORMANCES of BALLET with Anton Dolin Natalie Krassovska, Anna Cheselka and John Gilpin opened at the Kings Theatre, Southsea, on August 14. The company is having a huge success on tour and we hope to give a full account in our next issue. Alicia Markova should be dancing again when the company is in Edinburgh and the first performance of the new production of *Giselle* will take place in Glasgow. This ballet will be in the first night programme when the company comes to the Stoll Theatre on October 24.

Mona Inglesby as the Glove seller in Massine's Gaiete Parisienne. This ballet to Offenbach music was first revived by International Ballet at the London Coliseum and has had an enormous success, everywhere that it has been given
(*Photo: Fred Daniels*)

★

John Regan's THREE ARTS BALLET was at the People's Palace for a week from August 21. This company of twenty-three was reformed to tour the London Parks and the provinces. The company consists of Domini Callaghan, Michel de Lutry, Carmen Chica, Seamus Gordon, Nancy Holder, Marjorie Woodhams, Christopher Dale, Betty Shawe and Lisa Brionda (as guest artist) plus a *corps de ballet*. Of the classics, they give *Lac des Cygnes* (Act 2), *Les Sylphides*, and the *Grand pas de deux* from *Don Quixote*, *Lac des Cygnes*, Act 3 (The Black Swan), and *Giselle* Act 1. The Ballets by John Regan include *Paradise Row* (Norman Dannatt music) originally given on television; *Cafe Continental* (Offenbach and Strauss music); *Baba Yaga* (traditional Russian music); *Shiva and Pavati* (traditional Indian music). Michael Holmes made *Fête Champetre* to a suite of French peasant dances by Gretry. Carmen Chica dances Spanish variations *La Vida Breva*, *Talaverana*, *Sevilla*.

The company played for two weeks at the Bedford Theatre, Camden Town from September 4. After that they started on a tour of Bexhill, Bognor and Brighton.

Dance and Dancers . . . . ABROAD

FRANCE

Our correspondent, ALEX MARTIN, on his way back from reporting the Florence Festival (see our July and August numbers) stopped off in Paris to see the opening of Martha Graham at the Theatre de Champs-Elysées. Although it is rather late for any report on Martha Graham's European tour, we are printing Alex Martin's criticism so that Martha Graham will not go unrecorded in the pages of DANCE AND DANCERS :—

Martha Graham arrived in Paris to dance to a public which had become rather suspicious of dance and dancers from across the waters, the unfortunate season given by Les Ballets Americains of Ruth Page and Bentley Stone with Jose Limon; the less disastrous (because shorter) season given by the Ambassador Ballet from London; and the season of Ballet Rambert which although successful artistically could not be considered to have been triumphant—all these factors explain why on the opening night the house was just over half full. Not that the French had any great reason to be proud of what they had to offer in the way of ballet at that particular moment—the Opera continued to turn out catastrophes, Les Ballets de Paris continued to give *Carmen* and two other ballets, the Champs-Elysées had just finished the season of performances for which only the Greeks and Eliza Doolittle had a word.

So Mrs. Roosevelt, myself and some others hied ourselves to the Champs-Elysées theatre on June 27 to see the fabulous Martha who had been described in one of the French weeklies as "Margot Graham, the greatest classic dancer of the United States."

The opening ballet was *Errand into the Maze* —it was superb. To a fine score by Menotti, Graham and Eric Hawkins by themselves held us spellbound for a good half hour. Graham's personality hits one like a slap in the face, the strength and control of her dancing is a revelation of how a clumsy instrument such as the human body can be completely controlled by what is obviously a mind way above that of the average intelligent dancer. Hawkins also has remarkable control and a strong personality, but is not as striking as Graham. The ballet itself was clear, well conceived, and easy to follow. The story is of the Minotaur in the Labyrinth, with the implication that the maze is also the heart and the Minotaur the fear hidden therein. Choreographed with stark simplicity and at the same time extraordinary ingenuity, it was danced in a setting mainly consisting of a swirling silver metal ribbon, motionless on an almost bare stage.

The Eye of Anguish—the inner torments of King Lear—was a trifle confusing though it had many brilliant moments which I personally failed to link together into a comprehensible whole. I fear the failure was mine.

A Cave of the Heart I found more easy to follow in spite of the fact that I could not take my eyes from Graham. Her portrayal of jealousy is one of the most intense performances I have ever seen on any stage.

The programme concluded with *Every Soul is a Circus* which was a sad anticlimax. Graham has no wit and her humour is too broad and open for the medium she uses. After three such intense ballets I was eager for some light relief, but Graham in a humorous vein was rather like Mr. Einstein with a false nose.

To sum up. Graham is undoubtedly the finest modern dancer to be seen and probably one of the greatest in the whole dance world. Her ballets need the closest attention and one cannot hope to begin to understand her outlook until after several visits. It is not that they are obscure but one has to first acclimatise oneself to the new medium. That she has had a terrific influence on American dance is obvious. De Mille, who has a strong personal spell has adopted and modified Graham's clarification of arm movements by brittle stylisation with great success, but does not use the whole torso with such telling effect.

If Graham does not come to England next year, I recommend all the mountains who can afford it to go at once to the U.S.A. to see this unique Mahomed of the dance. Most fantastic of all is the fact that this superb artist with her blazing personality and magnificent movement is a woman nearing her fifties. May she continue to be ageless.

★

I fear that for me the BALLETS DE PARIS came as an anticlimax. Belinda Wright and Nicholas Polajenko in the principal roles in *Les Demoiselles de la Nuit* had only the charm that beautiful youthful immaturity can offer, to recommend them. This most romantic ballet when danced by charming young people becomes merely sentimental and the pyrotechnics become all too obvious. The bed was filthy and one was strongly under the impression that the laundries in France had been on strike for at least two years. *L'Oeuf à la Coque*, in a new and shortened version not seen in England, is now more of a romp and less of a

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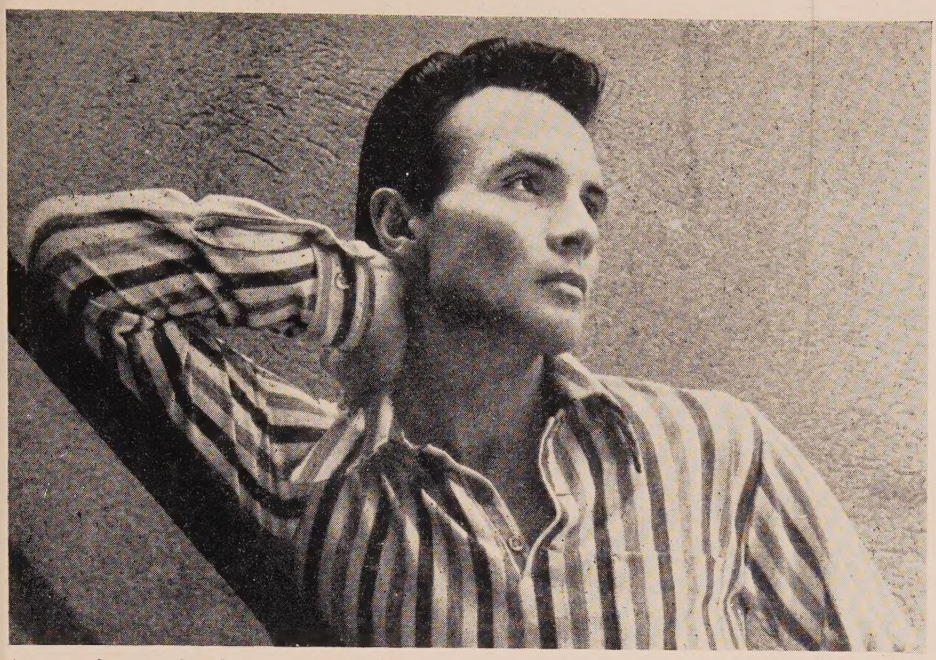

A new photograph of James Mitchell who has left films and stage musicals and has joined American National Ballet Theatre. It was his dancing as Harry Beaton in the Broadway production of Brigadoon *that first made people realise that he was a dancer of note. With American National Ballet Theatre he dances principal roles in* Rodeo, Pillar of Fire, Fall River Legend, *and* Romeo and Juliet

revue. Colette Marchand, the only surviving chicken in this new version is perfection. Every flicker of the eyelids, every shrug of those beautiful shoulders, is so right that she lifts this gay little *soufflé* into the realms of greatness ably supported by the rest of the cast.

Carmen wears wonderfully even without Jeanmaire. The sets retain every scrap of their blazing urgency, especially the tavern scene and Marchand, although not the ideal Carmen, is a very good one. It is undoubtedly a shock to see a blonde Carmen, a clean Carmen, and especially an almost aristocratic Carmen but she nevertheless almost succeeds in conquering her virtues despite a lack of speed and crispness. Belinda Wright in the old Jane Laoust role is very good and Hamilton in his old part of the pickpocket is as good as ever.

Perhaps the most surprising thing in this most French of all French companies is that the Anglo-Saxon dancers Hamilton, Wright, Stanley Hall, and Jack Claus are the most French of all. The latter nearly steals *L'Oeuf à la Coque* from Marchand and is brilliantly aided by Stanley Hall who is now very funny indeed.

★

Rehearsals of David Lichine's new Company are proceeding steadily at a big villa on the edge of the Bois de Boulogne. The dancers work six, sometimes seven, days a week, without pay but with most exciting enthusiasm and sincerity. Besides Riabouchinska and Lichine the Company now includes Ludmilla Tcherina, Wladimir Skouratoff and Nikita Talin (from the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo). There is a large *corps de ballet*, very young and very talented, most of whom are also used as soloists. Xenia Palley who attracted attention as the Midinette in *Beau Danube* with the Cuevas Company last year stands out here for her lovely feet, clean line and beautifully controlled technique. Gladys Loubert and Olga Barneva were both members of the de Basil Company and Wolfgang Brunner is temporarily dancing with the Ballets de Paris.

Two new names to note are Jaccqueline Mannachez and Josette Robert. Both are pretty, with excellent line and elevation and charming personalities. Jaccqueline has also an ability to balance on point in any position or to turn on point in *arabesque* or *seconde* which is quite incredible. She is seventeen and her only public appearance so far has been the film version of *Graduation Ball* in which she danced the *fouette* competition.

The repertoire includes *Les Sylphides* (with Riabouchinska and Talin) *Le Lac des Cygnes*, *Graduation Ball*, *La Sylphide*, and the version of Debussy's *Jeux* which Lichine mounted for the Cuevas Company last year. This has a completely new story, concerns skiing instead of tennis and uses a larger number of dancers.

Among the new ballets are two by Gsovsky: *Errante* to Schubert's Wanderer Fantasia has a 'Miracle' theme. It contains lovely work for Riabouchinska and gives opportunities to all the most gifted young dancers. *Le Treize Juillet* is not yet completed but it has a gay Offenbach score and includes a brilliant solo for Nikita Talin.

Boris Kniaseff has mounted a work with a Brahms score in which Skouratoff dances the leading role and Lichine is working on one to a delightful Schumann pastiche. This latter contains finely contrasted solos for Riabouchinska (lightness), Palley (line), Mannachez (technique), Genevieve Godefroy (expression), and Barneva (attack). Lichine is also planning a grotesque comedy ballet and fresh ideas and dancers seem to appear every day.

No definite season is yet scheduled but Lichine hopes to open in Paris in October or November and to bring the Company to England early in 1951. **Christine Hunter**

SCANDINAVIA

From Copenhagen our correspondent BENT SCHONBERG writes :—

Henning Brondsted, chief of the Royal Theatre, Copenhagen, has given the Press information about the new season. Most interesting for British readers is the fact that Mr. Brondsted has been in communication with Ninette de Valois, Margot Fonteyn and Frederick Ashton. As the theatre has been ordered by Parliament to save as much money as possible in the coming season and as it is rather expensive to have a full company as guests of the Royal Theatre, there now seems little hope that Sadler's Wells will appear in Copenhagen during the coming year. It has been decided, however, that Sadler's Wells and the Royal Theatre shall exchange dancers, ballets, and possibly choreographers. Though nothing has definitely been decided the idea seems to be that young Danish dancers should appear with Sadler's Wells for some months, possibly half a year, and that English dancers in return should go to Copenhagen.

There have been contacts with George Balanchine, but as he wants his salary in dollars so Denmark will have to wait until better days before it will be possible for him to choreograph ballets.

A few foreign guests will appear during the season. Possibly Markova and Dolin will dance in *Swan Lake* and *Giselle*. This is the first time that they will appear together at the Royal Theatre and the first time that Markova has ever danced in Copenhagen.

Colonel de Basil will arrive here soon to have a conference with the theatre. It is hoped that the same plan as the theatre has with Sadler's Wells will be used with de Basil.

The plans for the new season which opened on September 1st. (with *La Sylphide*; *Symphonie Classique*; *Morning*, *Noon and Evening*), include a new production of Ravel's *La Valse* with choreography by Harald Lander; this has it's *premiere* on September 3. *Romeo and Juliet* by Birger Bartholin (subject of an article in this issue) to Tchaikovsky music. *Desire* to the piano concerto of Gershwin with choreography by the soloist Nils Bjorn Larsen. *La Vida Breve* by Harald Lander to De Falla music.

Bournonville's *The Wedding Festival* which has not been given since 1930 will be revived during the season. Hans Beck, former *mâitre de ballet*, who danced at the Royal Theatre while Bournonville was still alive, will assist with the production.

Where are they now ?

NAME	PREVIOUSLY WITH	HAS JOINED
Domini Callaghan	International and Metropolitan Ballet	Three Arts Ballet
Anna Cheselka	Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas	Anton Dolin's Company
Sally Gilmour	Ballet Rambert	*Carousel*
Natalie Krassovska	Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo	Anton Dolin's Company.
Jane Shore	Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet	Sadler's Wells Ballet
Ann Suren	International Ballet	Anton Dolin's Company
Maurice Bejart	International Ballet	Guest choreographer in America
Peter Darrell	Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet	State Theatre, Malmo
John Gilpin	Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas	Anton Dolin's Company
Eric Hyrst	Metropolitan and Ambassador Ballet	New York City Ballet
Michel de Lutry	Metropolitan Ballet	Three Arts Ballet
James Mitchell	American films and musicals	American National Ballet Theatre

Ballet Dates

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET

Sept. 23 (M) *Le Lac des Cygnes Act* 2, *The Haunted Ballroom*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Trumpet Concerto*.

26 (E) *Les Sylphides*, *El Destino*, *Blue Bird Pas de Deux*, *Trumpet Concerto*, *Casse Noisette Act* 2.

29 (E) *Les Rendezvous* (with Opera, *Hugh the Drover*).

30 (M) *Les Sylphides*, *El Destino*, *Pas de Deux* (*Giselle*), *Trumpet Concerto*, *Les Rendezvous*.

Oct. 3 (E) *Le Lac des Cygnes Act* 2, *Sea Change*, *Blue Bird Pas de Deux*, *Jota Toledana*, *Les Rendezvous*.

7 (M) *Casse Noisette Act* 2, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales*, *Summer Interlude*.

11 (E) *Summer Interlude*, *The Haunted Ballroom*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Casse Noisette Act* 2.

14 (M) *Le Lac des Cygnes Act* 2, *El Destino*, *Bluebird Pas de Deux*, *Trumpet Concerto*, *Les Rendezvous*.

BALLET RAMBERT ON TOUR

Sept. 25	People's Palace, London.
Oct. 2	Regent Theatre, Chelmsford.
9-21	King's Theatre, Hammersmith.
23	Cheltenham.
Nov. 6	Arts Theatre, Cambridge.
13	Playhouse, Kidderminster.
20	Theatre Royal, Norwich.
27	New Theatre, Northampton.
Dec. 4	Prince of Wales, Cardiff.
11	Richmond Theatre, Richmond.

INTERNATIONAL BALLET

Sept. 25	Lyceum, Theatre, Sheffield.
Oct. 2-14	Grand Theatre, Leeds.
16-21	Theatre Royal, Nottingham.

FESTIVAL BALLET

(Previously called Gala Performances of Ballet with Anton Dolin. The company also includes Natalie Krassovska, Anna Cheselka, John Gilpin and other stars. Alicia Markova will return to the company on October 9, during the week at Edinburgh).

Sept. 18	Theatre Royal, Bolton.
25	Theatre Royal, Norwich.
Oct. 2	The Pavilion, Bournemouth.
9	The Empire, Edinburgh.
16	The Alhambra, Glasgow.
24	The Stoll Theatre, London.

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LONDON

Lewisham Ballet Theatre Club—Sec.: Margaret S. Childs, 47 Allenswood Road, Eltham E.9.

Winter classes, under the direction of Maria Balinska and Francesca Price, started on September 18. The clubroom is now at Holy Trinity Hall, Loch Aber Road, Lee, where the club meets every second Tuesday in the month from September 12 to April 10, 1951.

Lectures are being arranged during January and April when it is hoped that the lecturers will be Mr. Maurice Cole and Mr. Leo Kersley, and also at least one of the leading dancers from Sadler's Wells company.

For the Festival of Britain next year a local production is being arranged and it is hoped that the Club will provide at least half of the evenings entertainments.

All members of other ballet clubs will be very welcome at the club's monthly meetings when it is hoped to exchange news of their various activities.

The Wimbledon Ballet Club—Sec.: Geoffrey Lance, 61 Ridgeway Place, S.W.19.

On September 25 the club reopened after the summer recess. On August Bank Holiday Mr. Colin Smith, solo pianist at the Summer Fair, in conjunction with the Wimbledon Community Association gave an evening entertainment. Members of the ballet club performed *Moments Musical* and dances from *Swan Lake*.

Ballet for beginners

These columns are for those of you who have only recently become interested in ballet. Each month we shall give you the story of a famous ballet, a glossary of some of the expressions that are used, and other articles to help you to understand more about the art.

THE STORY OF A BALLET

PETROUCHKA

FIRST performed by the Diaghilev company at the Theatre du Chatelet in Paris on June 13, 1911. Music by Igor Stravinsky. Setting and costumes by Alexandre Benois. Choreography by Michel Fokine.

It was always the custom in St. Petersburg during the last few days before Lent that a fair should take place in the famous Admiralty Square. During this time, most people got very drunk as it was probably the last they would have to drink for forty days. The square was gay with booths of all kinds, some showing freaks, some where you could eat, and others where puppet performances were given.

The ballet opens on the old square with the crowd in a holiday mood; on the left hand side of the stage an old man draws attention to the length of his beard. In the centre stands a curtained booth where, at the moment, nothing appears to be happening. On the right are more stalls with gingerbreads and other bright baubles. Street dancers entertain the crowd, one dances with a triangle, another does acrobatics; a man with a peep-show attracts an audience. Suddenly out of the centre booth come two tall drummers, they beat on their drums and move the crowd away from the booth. After a space has been cleared the old showman appears through the curtain. He plays a strange melody on a flute which amuses some of the people and entrances others. Suddenly he causes the curtains of the booth to fly apart to reveal three figures—A Moor, a Ballerina, and the rather battered figure of Petrouchka. At a signal from the old showman, the three dolls jerk into life. Coming out of the booth they perform a lively dance amongst the crowd, who are delighted.

Back in his cell, Petrouchka is unhappy as he wants to escape and go off with the Ballerina. He detests the old showman whose picture is ever before him. The Ballerina comes in and he tries to impress her but his ugly aspect and boorish manner merely frightens her and she runs away. Left alone again he tears at the walls and eventually succeeds in breaking through. He hangs half out of the cell and finally collapses on the ground.

The Moor's room is very different; it is rich and garish and has a divan upon which he idles away the time. He plays with a cocoanut, which he throws up in the air with his feet and then catches it with his hands, but tiring of this pastime he tries to crack it. His failure upsets him so he bows down and worships it. Suddenly the door bursts open and the Ballerina dances in playing on a toy trumpet. The Moor is fascinated by her and attempts to make love to her; she in her turn is pleased at his advances and does not repulse him. He drags her on to his knee but at that moment they are interrupted by the entrance of Petrouchka who is furious and tries to fight the Moor. Kicking Petrouchka out of the door, the Moor continues to make love to the Ballerina.

The fair towards evening sees most people more drunk and riotous than they were before. Coachmen invite nursemaids to dance, but they decide to dance among themselves. A performing bear is led through the crowd. A merchant distributes money to everyone. Gypsy fortune-tellers incite everyone to even greater exertions. As the snow starts to fall, the coachmen, in order to keep warm, start a lively dance while the nursemaids weave in and out between them. Devils and other carnival figures arrive and everyone is caught up in the whirl of the dance. Suddenly there is a commotion in the booth and Petrouchka rushes out followed by the Moor who is followed by the Ballerina. The Moor strikes down Petrouchka with a blow from his scimitar, and then leaves him to die in the snow. The crowd gather round and someone goes off to get a policeman and the showman. The showman picks up Petrouchka and proves that he was only a creature of wood and sawdust. Realising they have been fooled, the crowd departs slowly into the dark night. Left alone with his puppet, the showman drags him towards the booth. All of a sudden there is a shriek from above the booth and the ghost of Petrouchka appears to mock the old man who dropping the puppet, rushes away in terror.

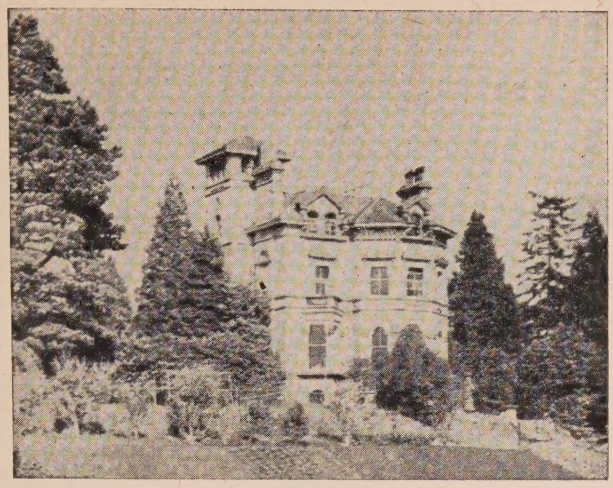
GLOSSARY

Danseur Noble. The literal meaning is a 'noble male dancer'. In ballet it means a purely classical principal male dancer such as you would see in *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty* or *Les Sylphides*.

Entrée. Means an entrance or first appearance. The moment when the ballerina and her cavalier first come on in a *grand pas de deux* is known as an *entrée*. It can also mean a suite of dances performed by a number of dancers.

Porteur. Literally means a carrier or bearer. During the Romantic Era of the last century, the male dancer became somebody who carried the ballerina across the stage, he had few other uses in ballet.

Variation. In ballet this word means a solo performed by either a male or female dancer in a classical ballet. The word "solo" is equally correct.



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